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THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

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XXXV.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

AS TREATED BY ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

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THE first part of this brief dissertation appeared in the *Revue anglo-romaine* of June 20, 1896. Written at Rome under great pressure of time to meet an instant emergency, it might easily have been improved and brought into a form more suitable for English readers. It has, however, been thought wiser to republish it in English exactly as it originally appeared in French, omitting only an allusion to a personal incident which is already forgotten. The second part was to have followed immediately, but in the interval the Encyclical, *Satis cognitum*, on the Unity of the Church, was issued, and it was thought unseemly to continue the treatment of the subject in a sense necessarily opposed to that of the papal document. The scope of the dissertation was shown to be

purely historical, the statement only of what had actually been taught in the Church of England; but in spite of this it was held in very high quarters that the second part ought not to appear in the Review. It was accordingly withdrawn.

In greater leisure it has been carefully revised and considerably enlarged. To those who lack opportunity for study, this little book may perhaps be useful as summarizing the teaching of the Church upon a subject which is continually in debate; with others, it will entirely fail of its object if it does not lead them to study at first hand the great masters of theology whose conclusions are here recorded.

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THE
UNITY OF THE CHURCH
AS TREATED BY ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS.

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PART I.

§ 1.

As we say our Creed we profess our belief in *one only* Church. What do we mean by this unity? What is this one Church? Clearly we suppose ourselves to be members of it: unless, indeed, we are using words without any present meaning, a relic of a former state of things, or a pious aspiration after a future development. But what is this one Church of which we claim to be members? We of the English Church are regarded by the greater part of Christendom as a separate body, completely isolated. How do we regard ourselves? (1) Do we shut ourselves up in our own communion, declaring that this alone is the true

Church of Christ? (2) Do we console ourselves with the fiction of an invisible Church which is one throughout the world, of which the true members are known only to God? (3) Do we picture to ourselves a number of separate societies, united only by the fact that all receive the same grace and share in the same spiritual life of the sacraments? (4) Do we think of the one Church as composed of several societies or communions, loosely associated in a sort of federal union?

Here are four questions which habitually occur to those who study the Church of England from without. They may perhaps have seen or heard remarks of individuals among us which appear to suggest an affirmative answer to one or the other of these questions. I shall endeavour in the first place to show that such an affirmative answer would entirely misrepresent the conception of unity which prevails among English theologians, and I will then try to set out this conception in a more positive fashion.

§ 2.

It should hardly be necessary to answer the first question. But if it be needful to show that the Church of England is regarded

as a part only, and a purely local part, of one whole Church, I can do this best by quoting her own most official language. The Preface of the Prayer Book, written at the time of the last revision in 1662, speaks of certain alterations then proposed, but rejected, as "secretly striking at some established doctrine or laudable practice of the Church of England, or indeed of the *whole Catholick Church* of Christ." And further, this particularity of the English Church is to be regarded as purely local or geographical. The short treatise *Of ceremonies*, prefixed to the Prayer Book, says expressly, "In these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only: for we think it convenient that every country should use such Ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition."

You may, if you will, call this an expression of an exaggerated particularity, or of a dangerous nationalism; but you will find no room left for the idea that the English Church claims to be herself alone the true Church of Christ.

§ 3.

The second question brings us face to face with the fundamental principle of the *Dissidence of Dissent*. According to this principle, the one true Church of Christ is not visible here on earth. It is a mystic invisible body, the members of which are known to God alone. Believers are free to band themselves together in different congregations; and every such congregation forms a *Visible Church*, which may, or may not, include some members of that one Church which is the mystical Body of Christ. The external organization is purely local, accidental and temporary; membership in it is voluntary and has no necessary relation to the spiritual life. A Christian may join himself to any such organization or may leave it as he wills. Any number of these societies may exist side by side, in friendly or hostile rivalry. It is well that they should live at peace among themselves, with mutual offices of good-will and charity, for that is a Christian duty; but the invisible unity of the one true Church is neither injured by their quarrels nor promoted by their alliance. There is no need for them to have any formal relations with each other;

still less is it necessary or even desirable that they should submit to any common rule, adopt even approximately any common form of worship, or make any common profession of faith Some great and fundamental truths indeed they must hold in common, but even these need not be defined by all in the same terms, or should be expressed only in the terms of Scripture.

I have sketched a theory of the Church which is widely held in England, still more widely in America and the English colonies, and which is not unknown among the Protestants of Europe. I might trace its genesis to the confusion of the Reformation, its gradual development among the English separatists, its enormous growth during the present century. It is more to the point to observe it as now in full vigour. It is the theory of the *Evangelical Alliance*.

It is clear that one who holds to this theory may profess his belief in *One Church*. He will mean the Invisible Church of which he dreams. Does the English Church leave her members free to make their profession of faith in this sense?

The Thirty-nine Articles do not directly condemn this theory. At the time of their

composition it was not yet sufficiently developed; nor do I find that our rulers have ever taken the trouble to pronounce an express judgement upon it. But at the same time the definition of the Church which is found in the Thirty-nine Articles will exclude any such idea.

"Ecclesia Christi visibilis est coetus fidelium, in quo verbum Dei purum praedicatur, et sacramenta, quoad ea quae necessario exiguntur, iuxta Christi institutum recte administrantur."

"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same[1]."

This definition as read in the Latin might indeed stand for the particular and local visible Church of the theory which we are considering. But the English version, which has equal authority with the Latin, uses the

[1] Article xix. Compare the definition of Bellarmine, *Controvers.* l. iii. *de Ecclesia*, c. 2: "Nostra sententia est ecclesiam unam tantum esse, non duas, et illam unam et veram esse coetum hominum eiusdem Christianae fidei professione et eorundem sacramentorum communione colligatum sub regimine legimitorum pastorum ac praecipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii Romani pontificis." With this again compare that of Lyndwood, the English canonist of the fifteenth century: "Ecclesia Christiana cum suis sacramentis et legibus, quae aliter appellatur Catholica seu Universalis, dicitur Fidelium multitudo fide et caritate unita." *Prov.* lib. i. tit. i.

definite article in a way to exclude any such interpretation. Any doubt which may remain will be set at rest by a citation from one of the authorized homilies: "The true Church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner-stone. And it hath always these notes or marks whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline[1]."

The Church is here defined as universal and also as visible, having marks by which it may be recognized. Moreover, the Church of England has forbidden her own faithful, under pain of excommunication, to maintain the legitimacy of such freely formed congregations as are contemplated by the theory in question. The eleventh of the canons promulgated in the Synod of London in the year 1604 runs as follows:—

"Quicunque in posterum affirmabit aut tuebitur ullos conventus, coetus, aut congregationes subditorum indigenarum infra hoc regnum

"Whoever shall hereafter affirm or maintain, that there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the King's born

[1] Homily for Whitsunday, part ii.

existere (praeter eos qui ex huius regni legibus tenentur et approbantur) qui verarum et legitimarum ecclesiarum nomen possint sibi iure vendicare: excommunicetur, non nisi per Archiepiscopum restituendus, idque postquam resipuerit, et impium hunc errorem publice revocarit."

subjects, than such as by the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful Churches; let him be excommunicated, and not restored, but by the Archbishop, after his repentance, and public revocation of such his wicked errors."

In the face of this declaration it is impossible for any one seriously to maintain that the opinion of *dissidence* is free to the members of the English Church. In professing their belief in *One Church* they cannot fall back upon the theory of an Invisible Church, consisting of members hidden in divers visible organizations.

But does the teaching which is actually in force follow these lines? We hear from time to time of priests of the Church taking part with ministers of the Protestant sects in proceedings of a compromising character; we hear of them in conferences at Grindelwald and elsewhere, which appear to be conducted on the principle of dissidence. We find some of them engaged with the Evangelical Alliance itself. What shall we say to this?

We may admit in the first place that there

is in certain quarters a dangerous tendency to abandon the ground of principle in this respect. We may allow also that there is very widely diffused a sort of timidity, which hinders alike the plain declaration of the teaching of the Church, and the reprobation of those who offend against it. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that this timidity is due to an imperfect grasp of the truth. It is due to entirely different causes. In England we are face to face with an organized sectarianism, always aggressive, and not so very long since powerful both socially and politically. To denounce this, or even to teach definitely the truth which it opposes, is to invite virulent attacks, and a ridicule which it needs no little courage to face.

But I will point out in the next place that much of our fraternization with the ministers of Protestant sects does not in the least imply an acceptance of the principle of dissidence. It is on the contrary adopted as a means of spreading the truth. The Archbishop of York, whom no one will suspect of any unfaithfulness to the principle of unity, invites the Protestant ministers of his diocese to his palace. It is precisely what the great Bossuet loved to do. Even those who assist at the

conferences at Grindelwald and elsewhere, find there an opportunity for driving home some truths to the assembled sectaries. Indeed, it was at Lucerne that Mr. Hammond, Canon of Truro, read his paper on what he calls, by a painfully barbarous term, "Polychurchism," the most vigorous attack on the principle of dissidence which recent times have seen. At the Norwich Church Congress there was a long discussion on the hindrances to the reconciliation of Dissenters, when Mr. Hammond was again the protagonist, and I do not remember that a single word was said which suggested any paltering with the truth.

The best witness however to the actual teaching of the Church is afforded by the Dissenters themselves. They denounce the exclusiveness of the Church, the arrogance of the priesthood. They band themselves together, in spite of their mutual antagonisms, in a union of hatred against this one body which refuses to consort with them, and which will not so much as allow them the name of *Churches*. They have been working for years to drive the clergy from the schools on the express ground that they teach the children the iniquity of dissidence. If in spite of all our carefulness, our moderation our

timidity indeed, we bring these attacks upon ourselves, it is clear that we cannot be altogether neglecting the duty of insisting on the visible unity of the Church.

§ 4.

The conception of unity implied in the third question is one, we must admit, which has great attractions for many amongst us. For them the Church throughout the world is actually and visibly one, by virtue of the one spiritual life which all its members share in common by the visible means of the sacraments. They may be entirely without intercourse, they may be separated from one another in sympathy, they may disagree even in matters of faith; but being baptized into one Body, and partaking of the one Bread of Life, they are inseparably one. This unity of the Church is a natural fact, comparable to that of a family where the brothers, being born of one father, remain necessarily and indestructibly united by origin and kinship, however widely they may be sundered by accidents of travel, by difference of tastes and pursuits, or even by bitter enmities.

It is unnecessary to point out the inconveniences and inconsistences which flow from

this theory if it be taken for a complete statement of the unity of the Church. My object is rather to show that, whatever partial truth it enshrines, it cannot lawfully be taken as expressing the whole meaning of our belief in *One Church*. My citation from the Homilies may be sufficient for this, where *the right use of ecclesiastical discipline* is set down as one of the notes or marks of the true Church. A community of Christians, then, who lack this, even if they enjoy the fullest possession of the sacraments, cannot be regarded as forming a part of the one Church in which we profess our belief. We shall not of course interpret the phrase rigorously, so as to conclude that a weak or faulty administration of discipline would involve a defection from the Church, but we shall be compelled to allow that the general maintenance of the constitution of the Catholic Church on its broad lines must be required of any local organization which shall claim to be a part of the whole. The precise nature indeed of the discipline here proposed as necessary is matter for further question. The demand is mentioned here only as evidence that we do not make the unity of the Church rest merely on participation in the sacraments.

But again, in the Visible Church, as defined in the Thirty-nine Articles, the *pure word of God* must be preached. As the late Bishop of Winchester pointed out in his Commentary on the Articles, the expression is not "the word of God is purely preached," but "the pure word of God is preached." In other words, the definition does not point to a subjective purity of teaching, but to the possession of an objective body of doctrine, the main truths of the Gospel, the fundamentals of Christianity, the Faith of the Church. As there is one sacramental life, so also there must be one faith, and those who do not hold this faith cannot be reckoned as within the unity of the Visible Church. The practice of the English Church in this respect can be precisely determined. At the request of the Nestorians of Persia and Kurdistan the Archbishop of Canterbury maintains a mission among them. The missionaries are forbidden to proselytize from the Nestorians, or in any way to break up or disturb their ecclesiastical order; but, on the other hand, they are not allowed to communicate with them until such time as they shall renounce their heresy and acknowledge the faith of the Church as defined at Ephesus.

It is clear that neither the authoritative teaching nor the practice of the Church of England will tolerate the theory which makes the essential unity of the Church consist solely in the unity of the sacramental life.

§ 5.

There is a fourth theory which is often attributed to us—an imputation founded, perhaps, on a rigorous interpretation of certain careless statements of individuals. It is commonly known as the *Branch Theory*, and as such it is made the object of attack by many disputants, who expend considerable ingenuity in assailing a position which no one defends. The term *Branch* is indeed used in connexion with the Church by many of our best writers. They will speak of the English Branch of the Church, of the Roman or the Greek Branch. They will speak also of the French or Spanish, or of the American Branch. The distinguished Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Wordsworth, was a well-known exponent of the idea set forth by this expression. But he made it perfectly plain in what sense he used it. In his *Theophilus Anglicanus*, discoursing *On the Anglican Branch of the Catholic Church*, he quotes from Hooker:—"As the main

body of the sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names, so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct societies, every one of which is termed a Church within itself[1]." Thus when our writers speak of the Branches of the Church, they have in view the local divisions or branches of a homogeneous body such as the sea.

The term, however, is ambiguous, and very naturally suggests the branches of a *tree*—a suggestion which is perhaps aided by an inaccurate association with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, comparing individual Christians to the branches of the vine, or with those of St. Paul describing them as engrafted into the olive tree. Hence there results a not unfrequent extension of the figure, which represents far less accurately the constitution of the Church. For the branches of a tree, though they spring from a common stem, and derive sap from the same root, have no sort of actual communication or intercourse with each other, none of that free circulation which establishes a real unity between the various divisions of the sea.

It is this comparison with the branches of

[1] *Eccl. Pol.* bk. iii. ch. i. § 14.

a tree, and all the consequences which may be rigorously deduced from it, which some of our critics are eager to fasten upon us. We are supposed to hold that the various parts of the Church, like the branches of a tree, do indeed spring from a common stem, but are separate from each other, enjoying an entirely individual existence. We are asked ironically, if all the parts of the Church are branches, where is the stem? We are invited to show how an individual passes from one branch to another when he changes his domicile. We reply that these questions demand of us the explication and defence of an hypothesis which we do not in the least accept. This *Branch Theory* is not our invention; it is the invention of our adversaries who gratuitously attribute it to us. It is not for us to develop its absurdities.

They are not perhaps very open-minded critics who treat us in this fashion, but, partly as a consequence of persistent misrepresentation, we are in some quarters seriously supposed to regard the Catholic Church as consisting essentially of a number of separate and independent communions—the Roman, the Russo-Greek, and the Anglican, at least, even if we exclude, as heretical, the Copts and the

Armenians, and other separated Churches of the East. Our theory of the Church, on this supposition, regards each of these various communions or Churches as enjoying a corporate existence, as possessing a body of doctrine peculiar to itself, as endowed with a separate life and capacity of development. From this it would follow that, so far as the whole Church is one, its unity is found only in the agglomeration of these parts, essentially independent, but bound together by a loose federal tie. So loose indeed is the tie, that it does not as a matter of fact involve so much as diplomatic intercourse between the members of the union. Indeed they might rather be regarded as so many separate kingdoms reigned over by one Divine and invisible Monarch.

Now it is quite true that we do sometimes speak of the various *Communions* into which Christians are divided. In doing so we are merely noting an obvious fact. We in no way imply that they ought to be so divided, still less that such divisions are a necessary or essential feature of the Church's constitution. On the contrary we regard the fact as a deplorable one. I do not believe that a passage could be adduced from any of our writers treating this kind of division as a thing

good or even tolerable in itself. We recognize it only as a matter of fact. It is a state of things which has to be reckoned with for the present, and as soon as possible amended. Christians have not that perfect intercourse of charity and that perfect community of worship which they ought to have. Moreover, by reason of these differences they do actually fall into certain well-defined groups, and these groups are commonly called different *Communions*. The term may not be well chosen; it might be wiser to adopt one, if possible, which should lend itself less readily to misunderstanding; but we are not singular in the use of such inaccurate terms, nor are we conscious of giving any direct cause for misunderstanding.

We use the term, then, to express a certain unhappy fact; and we are careful not to extend its meaning beyond the precise limits of the fact. It is not these divers *Communions* that we regard as members or branches of the Catholic Church, but the local, provincial, or national Churches which are attached to one or other of them. The Church of France, the Church of Spain, are branches of the Universal Church. In one of the constitutions promulged in 1604, the

Church of England, speaking of our unhappy divisions, uses language of the most careful precision.

"Tantum aberat ut Ecclesia Anglicana ab Italiae, Galliae, Hispaniae, Germaniae, aliisve similibus Ecclesiis voluerit per omnia recedere, quicquid eas sciret tenere aut observare, ut . . . ceremonias illas cum reverentia susciperet, quas citra Ecclesiae incommodum ac hominum sobriorum offensionem retineri posse senserat."

"So far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that . . . it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies, which doth neither endamage the Church of God, nor offend the minds of sober men [1]."

It will be seen that we do not here read of the "Roman Communion" as an entity apart, but of the local Churches, within certain geographical limits, which in fact hold to the communion of the Roman See. We and they are unhappily separated from each other in a certain manner, but when we confess the one Church we believe that these Churches and the English Church are equally integrating parts of the one Catholic Church. The Branch Theory, in short, does not regard the Catholic Church as consisting of a confederation of several Communions; it merely

[1] Canon xxx.

recognizes the fact that the Church is organized in provinces and groups of provinces geographically circumscribed.

Again, when we work or pray for the reunion of Christendom, we do not regard our object as the development of a somewhat closer federal bond between three or more independent Churches; we desire the realization in practice of a true unity which already exists. We do not think of unity as proceeding from multiplicity; we recognize the profound truth that the Church is fundamentally and essentially one, and that from this unity proceeds the multiplicity of the local divisions. To return to the figure of speech which gives rise to this discussion, the branches of the Church are not like the branches of a tree, which have no real intercourse with each other, but like branches of the sea through which the same waters freely circulate. The divisions of Christendom we may compare to the floating boom with which the entrance to a harbour or bay is defended. It prevents the passage of ships, it hinders free communication upon the surface, but the waters flow freely beneath, and the continuity of the sea is unbroken.

PART II.

§ 1.

I HAVE examined and set aside four inadequate theories of unity. I am not here concerned with their proper falsity, but only with their inadequacy as representing the sense in which we actually profess our belief in the one Church. They spring from a simple misunderstanding of terms, or they are inconsistent with certain principles of belief and practice to which the English Church firmly adheres.

It remains to show in what sense we really are bound to use the words of the Creed. We believe in one Church. That is to say, there is, in the region of fact, but one Church, Catholic and Apostolic, to which we ourselves belong as members. We do not express an opinion that something ought to be which is not; nor yet a hope or aspiration for the future. We speak of that which exists, a part of the divine order. But our belief is in apparent contradiction to facts; the language of the Creed conflicts with the

language of ordinary life. We habitually speak of several Churches, some of them sharply antagonistic. How, then, do we believe in one Church?

It may be as well to remove out of the way at once a mere verbal quibble. No one finds any difficulty in reconciling the Scriptural language about the Churches of Asia or of Judaea with the truth of the unity of the Church. They are clearly but parts of a whole, each one sharing the common name, or else contributing to the whole in a collective sense the title which is proper to each. Neither is any doubt raised when we speak at the present day of the Churches of France or Spain. They are known to be held straitly together in a highly centralized system. In popular but very inaccurate language they would be called parts of the Roman Church. The difficulty begins when we find several Churches holding no intercourse with each other, or exchanging only frigid salutations, more or less completely denying one another communion. I do not speak of quarrels and controversies. When Rome and Carthage, Constantinople and Alexandria, were exchanging fierce denunciations over divergences of belief or practice, we may see in

the very vehemence of the dispute, in the ardour of mutual interference, a proof of underlying unity. But when, as now, great Churches treat each other with cool and even polite indifference, the note of unity is less easily found. Separation seems to be accepted as normal. And if there would be a difficulty even in the case of Churches geographically separated, a still greater confusion arises where the professed adherents of several Churches are locally intermingled.

The difficulty is simplified for those who persuade themselves that one only of these severed parts of Christendom is the true Church, and that all the rest are fallen away from unity. It is simplified, but not solved, for there remain questions about the nature of membership in the Church and the condition of the separated, which varieties of practice have rendered singularly embarrassing. With these, however, I have little or nothing to do. We have not attempted such a simplification of the problem. Neither the public teaching of the English Church nor the individual teaching of English theologians looks that way. We recognize the severed parts of Christendom as being truly parts of the one Church. Where, then, is the

unity? What is the one Church in which we believe?

I have distinguished the public teaching of the Church and the individual teaching of theologians, and to this distinction it will be convenient to adhere. The theologians speak with authority only as interpreting the teaching of the Church, and, conversely, if the public teaching of the Church be obscure, it is to the common interpretation of recognized theologians that we must turn.

§ 2.

Controversy regarding the unity of the Church can hardly be said to have existed before the fourteenth century. There were disputes whether certain persons or certain dioceses were or were not severed from the unity of the Church, but the dispute turned upon the validity of some excommunication, or upon details which could not be regarded as belonging to the essential constitution of the Church. Of the latter kind was the controversy that raged in the early years of the English Church about the Celtic usages. Men fought for uniformity in details, not for essential unity. But this trivial dispute was animated by a growing idea that Rome was in some sense

the centre of unity, and that unity was to be secured only by conformity to the practice of the Roman Church. St. Wilfrid was indeed a precursor of St. Boniface, that English missionary who was the true leader of the centralizing movement which laid the foundations of the later Papacy. The idea can hardly be said to have prevailed in the time of Wilfrid, but it grew in strength from his time onward. It was not however formulated: it did not appear in the recognized definitions of the Church. The definitions of earlier times, of St. Cyprian, of Theodoret, of St. Gregory the Great, were still considered adequate. The Church was merely the *Assembly of the faithful*. So it was defined by the Pope Nicholas I; so St. Thomas Aquinas defined it[1]. On the eve of the great schism, the

[1] St. Cyprian, *Ep.* lxvi. 8: "Illi sunt ecclesia plebs sacerdoti adunata et pastori suo grex adhaerens." lxix. 5: "Gregem nostrum significat commixtione adunatae multitudinis copulatum."

Theodoret in *Ep. ad Ephes.* i. 23: ἐκκλησίαν καλεῖ τὸν σύλλογον τῶν πιστῶν.

St. Greg. Mag. *Exp. mor. in Job*, lib. xix. cap. 22: "Sancta quippe Ecclesia sic consistit unitate Fidelium sicut corpus nostrum unitum est compage membrorum."

Nic. I. in Decr. *de Consecratione*, dist. i. cap. viii: "Ecclesia, id est, catholicorum congregatio."

The only place in the genuine writings of St. Thomas

Franciscan Nicholas de Lyra loosely described the Church as consisting of those in whom is the knowledge and genuine confession of the faith and the truth, without regard to ecclesiastical power and dignity [1].

It was coming to be thought, however, that communion with the Roman See was the test of unity. The bull *Unam Sanctam* gave coherence to the idea. When therefore the Great Schism broke out on the election of Urban VI in 1378, when for forty years there were two men, and at times three, each claiming to be the true occupant of the Holy See, the nature of the unity of the Church necessarily became matter of controversy. But

where I can find anything answering to a formal definition of the Church is *S. T.* iii. qu. 8. art. 4, where he seems to treat the phrase *Congregatio fidelium* as a sufficient definition. The following, however, from his Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, has considerable interest: "Cum Ecclesia Dei sit sicut civitas, est aliquod unum et distinctum. . . . In qualibet autem civitate ad hoc ut sit unum quattuor debent esse communia; scilicet unus gubernator, una lex, eadem insignia, et idem finis." On this he builds the unity of the Church, "quae est una; primo, quia habet ducem unum, scilicet, Christum," &c. *Comment. in Ephes.* c. iv. lect. ii.

[1] De Lyra, in *Matt.* xvi. 18: "Ecclesia non consistit in hominibus ratione potestatis vel dignitatis ecclesiasticae vel saecularis, quia multi Principes et Summi Pontifices et alii inferiores inventi sunt apostatasse a fide, propter quod ecclesia consistit in illis personis in quibus est notitia vera et confessio fidei et veritatis."

the controversy was smothered. The fiercer partisans of each Pope might claim that with them alone was the one true Church. Moderate men sought a practical solution. The Western Church was reunited in the Council of Constance by a practical expedient. Under the direction of the Council, the cardinals nominated by three rival popes combined to elect Martin V; visible unity was for a time restored, but the question remained undetermined, wherein the true unity of the Church consisted.

During all this period the English Church was disturbed by the same difficulties, and calmed by the same practical solution as the rest of Western Christendom. It may be as well, however, to note what was done in England at the time when the difficulties of the Schism reached their height. In 1416 there were three claimants to the Papacy. The English Church recognized none of them. Three sees were vacant, which in the ordinary practice of the age could not be filled without Bulls from Rome; in this emergency the Archbishop of Canterbury, fortified by royal support, filled the sees by his metropolitic authority[1]. It is plain that Chichele recognized the lawfulness, under proper circum-

[1] See the king's writs in Rymer, ix. 337, 338.

stances, of independent provincial action, without the authority of the Roman See. On the election of Martin V, the English Church returned without question to its former relations with the Papacy.

Thus the controversy of the Great Schism was without result. The definitions of the Church put forward even by Curialist theologians were as wide and indeterminate as before. The Cardinals de Cusa and de Turrecremata, the English Lyndwood, and others, were content to define it as the *Congregation of the Faithful*, sometimes with a vague attempt to identify the members, sometimes with the significant addition that Christ is the Head [1].

§ 3.

Such was the state of theological opinion when the storm of the Reformation broke

[1] Jo. de Turrecremata, *Summa de Ecclesia*, lib. i. cap. 1, thus defines the Church *secundum rem*: "Est enim catholicorum sive fidelium collectio." Just below, however, he adds: "Sive Ecclesia est universitas fidelium qui unius veri Dei cultu, unius fidei professione conveniunt."

Nic. Cusanus, *de Concordantia Catholica*, lib. i. cap. 1: "Ut per harmoniam quandam virtutum ac ministeriorum corpus unum, ex omnibus rationabilis naturae spiritibus, adhaereat capiti suo Christo."

For Lyndwood, see p. 12, note; and compare the definitions given below, pp. 43–46.

upon the Western Church. Within a very few years the partisans of Luther were called upon to formulate a theory of the constitution of the Church and its essential unity. They took a new departure, and they had to justify it. A little later the Swiss and the Genevese were subject to the same necessity. I have no immediate concern with their theories; they affected the opinions of certain Englishmen, but only as any treatment of an eagerly debated subject was bound to do so. The question which the English Church had to face was different from that which pressed upon the Protestants and the Swiss Reformers. The English Church as a body put aside the jurisdiction of the Roman See, as then usually exercised. Here the question was not whether individual Christians were cutting themselves off from the unity of the Church, but whether unity was destroyed by a rupture of the existing relations between certain parts of the Church. The question was not to be evaded. When the English Church, at the instance of Henry VIII, began to act independently of the Papacy, the cry of broken unity was at once raised. Reginald Pole wrote his *Defence of the Unity of the Church*, an epistle to Henry, which he soon afterwards published. Roundly

accusing the king of schism, he made his meaning the clearer by founding his accusation mainly on the title of *Supreme Head*. The one head of the Church on earth, he said, was the Roman Pontiff, and the unity of the Church consisted in subordination to him; to set up another head was to make another Church. Pole's language was rhetorical and exaggerated as usual; his later action at the time of the reconciliation shows that it must be read with some qualification; he did not clearly distinguish, as indeed theologians had not yet learnt to distinguish between the external oneness of the Church and its internal unity; but he raised a question, the practical meaning of which was clear. He was answered as clearly. Starkey and Tunstall replied that England was in no sense departing from the unity of the Church. The issue was definitely joined. From this time forward the position of the English Church was formally taken up, to be abandoned only for a few years under pressure of circumstances. But so far the position is only a negative one. To remain in the unity of the Church it is not necessary to submit to the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. What of the positive teaching?

§ 4.

I shall consider first the public teaching of the English Church. The pressure of controversy and the turmoil of the reformation movement made it necessary, in England as elsewhere, to put out some definitions of the truths that were most called in question. The English Church did this, rather hurriedly perhaps, in 1537, by publishing the book entitled *The Institution of a Christian Man.* Carefully revised, it was put forth again in 1543 under the title of *A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*, and, though popularly known as *The King's Book*, it was issued with the full synodical authority of the Church. In the exposition of the ninth article of the Creed, the Church is defined as— "*An assembly of people called out from other, as from infidels and heathens, to one faith and confession of the name of Christ.*"

Of this Church Christ is *the only Head*, and therefore it is Holy, by reason of His holiness. It is also *Catholic*, "that is to say, not limited to any one place or region of the world." There are therefore several Churches in divers parts of the world having "distinct ministers, and divers heads in earth." The unity of the

Church is nevertheless intact. "Yet be all these holy Churches but one holy Church Catholic, invited and called by one God the Father to enjoy the benefit of redemption wrought by one only Lord and Saviour Jesu Christ, and governed by one Holy Spirit, which teacheth to this foresaid holy Church one truth of God's holy word in one faith and baptism." It is then argued that the recognition of one supreme governor in earth is not necessary for preserving unity, and there follows a passage on the true nature of unity, which I must transcribe at length :—

"The unity therefore of the Church is not conserved by the Bishop of Rome's authority or doctrine: but the unity of the Catholic Church which all Christian men in this article do profess, is conserved and kept by the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, in retaining and maintaining of such doctrine and profession of Christian faith, and true observance of the same, as is taught by the Scripture and the doctrine apostolic. And particular Churches ought not in the said doctrine so accepted and allowed, to vary one from another for any lucre, arrogance, or any other worldly affection, but inviolably to observe the same, so that by reason of that

doctrine each Church that teacheth the same may be worthily called (as it is indeed) an apostolic Church, that is to say, following such teaching as the Apostles preached, with ministration of such sacraments as be approved by the same.

"And this unity of the holy Church of Christ is not divided by distance of place nor by diversity of traditions and ceremonies, diversely observed in divers Churches, for good order of the same. For the Churches of Corinth and of Ephese were one Church in God, though the one were far distant in place from the other: and though also in traditions, opinions, and policies there was some diversity among them, likewise as the Church of England, Spain, Italy, and Poole[1] be not separate from the unity, but be one Church in God, notwithstanding that among them there is great distance of place, diversity of traditions, not in all things unity of opinions, alteration in rites, ceremonies, and ordinances, or estimation of the same, as one Church peradventure doth esteem their rites, traditions, laws, ordinances, and ceremonies to be of more virtue and efficacy than another Church doth esteem the same. As the Church of Rome doth affirm certain

[1] i. e. Poland.

of their laws and ordinances to be of such estimation that they be of equal force with the word of God, and that whosoever disobeyeth or transgresseth the same committeth deadly sin; yet we, perceiving the same to be discrepant from the truth of Scripture, must needs therein dissent from them. But such diversity in opinions, and other outward manners and customs of policy, doth not dissolve and break the unity which is in one God, one faith, one doctrine of Christ and His sacraments, preserved and kept in these several Churches without any superiority or pre-eminence, that one Church by God's law may or ought to challenge over another[1]."

This teaching on the Unity of the Church became ingrained in English theology; the very words of the passage here cited find a continual echo in later utterances. The formal definition of the Church, however, given above, was clearly inadequate, and was soon improved. In 1552, at the time when the influence of the Swiss Reformers was working most disastrously in England, a new definition was adopted, which, so far from bearing the marks of that influence, differs

[1] *The King's Book.* Reprint by Browning, 1895, pp. 24–27.

from the older one only in being more precise. Forty-two *Articles of Religion* were then put forth, under the pretended authority of Convocation. The twentieth of these was identical with the nineteenth of the Thirty-nine Articles finally adopted by the Synods of 1562. I have already quoted this, but I repeat the text here for the sake of convenience :—

"Ecclesia Christi visibilis est coetus fidelium, in quo verbum Dei purum praedicatur, et sacramenta, quoad ea quae necessario exiguntur, iuxta Christi institutum recte administrantur."

"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

In this definition there are seven points to be noticed. (1) The Church here spoken of, as I have shown above, is that one universal Church which is rightly called Catholic. (2) This universal Church, spread throughout the world, is *visible,* and therefore, since it is exhibited to sense or to the understanding as *one,* it follows that the unity itself also must be visible. (3) It is a *congregation*, that is to say, it consists of a number of individuals, who are bound together in some special way. (4) It is a congregation of *faithful* men, that

is of men who profess a certain faith, and are known thereby. (5) In this Church the *pure word of God* is preached, or the sum of revealed truth. (6) The *sacraments* also are ministered in this Church; and the sacraments—to quote another of the Thirty-nine Articles—are "not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace[1]"; and among them Baptism is "a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church[2]"; whence it follows that the Church consists only of the baptized. (7) Lastly, the sacraments must be *duly* ministered, with all that is necessary for carrying out the ordinance of Christ; and therefore any professing themselves Christians who fall short of this requirement are so far alien from the one Church. But, further, the notion of *ministering* includes the idea of a certain control, and therefore the ministers of the sacraments must exercise some discipline;

[1] Art. xxv: "Sacramenta a Christo instituta non tantum sunt notae professionis Christianorum, sed certa quaedam potius testimonia et efficacia signa gratiae."

[2] Art. xxvii: "Baptismus . . . est signum regenerationis, per quod, tanquam per instrumentum, recte Baptismum suscipientes Ecclesiae inseruntur."

and since, according to these same Articles, it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of ministering the sacraments, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same[1], it follows that the true Church must be established under the rule of lawful pastors.

§ 5.

I have thought it well to analyze the whole of this definition, though it contains no actual reference to the note of unity, because upon the essential constitution of the Church depends the nature of its unity. But in the definition itself there is nothing peculiar, nothing to mark the standpoint of English theology. It corresponds closely to those that were current in the fifteenth century and earlier; contemporary theologians, even among those who strenuously supported the claims of the Roman Pontiff, were content with a similar form. Fisher, indeed, in controversy with Oecolampadius, fell back upon the simplest definition[2].

[1] Art. xxiii: "Non licet cuiquam sumere sibi munus publice praedicandi, aut administrandi sacramenta in Ecclesia, nisi prius fuerit ad haec obeunda legitime vocatus et missus."

[2] Fisher, *Contra Oecolampadium*, Praef. ad lib. iv. *ad finem*: "Quid est Ecclesia Catholica, nisi corpus unum ex plebe patribusque collectum, ubicumque fuerint per orbem sparsi?"

Albertus Pighius, face to face with the divisions that were racking the Church, distinguished the true part from the false merely as that which kept the true faith and worshipped the true God with true religion[1]. Michael Bucchinger proposed three alternative definitions of the Church, the longest and fullest being as follows: "A congregation of faithful men agreeing in one and the same doctrine of the Gospel according to the consent of the holy fathers, and in the same catholic and lawful administration of the sacraments[2]."

Stapleton was among the most vigorous con-

[1] *Hierarchiae Ecclesiasticae Assertio*, lib. i. cap. 1: "Ut evidens faciamus quaenam sit Christi Ecclesia, ab ipsa nominis notione exordiendum est. Ecclesia itaque Latine multitudinem, coetum, aut conventum significat. . . . Sed quoniam et vera est et falsa de Deo fides, vera falsaque religio, veri Dei falsorumque deorum cultus, hic statim in duo e diametro se secat Ecclesia, videlicet in Ecclesiam sanctam, quae rectam de Deo fidem servat, vera religione verum Deum colit et adorat, et ab eo salutem suam exspectat; et in eam quae dicta omnia non habet sincera ac recta, sed vel in omnibus vel in aliquo eorum aberrat."

[2] Bucchinger, *Hist. Eccl.*, Moguntiae, 1560, p. 1. His definitions are as follows:—

1. "Ecclesia Catholica militans est sanctorum communio, seu congregatio, complectens tam bonos quam malos.

2. Ecclesia est multitudo vel collectio fidelium fide et caritate unita.

3. Ecclesia est congregatio fidelium consentientium in unam ac eandem evangelii doctrinam, secundum conso-

troversialists on the papal side, yet his definition goes no further. "The word *Ecclesia*," he says, "means nothing else but the whole multitude of the faithful scattered throughout the world." Coming to close quarters with the Calvinist opinion that the elect belong to the Church even before Baptism, he requires something more precise, and produces the following definition: "The Church is a society of those that profess the name of Christ, gathered and lawfully ordered in the unity of the faith and sacraments." Elsewhere he makes one of several modes of unity consist in submission to the Roman see [1]. Estius, when

nantiam sanctorum patrum et in eundem Catholicum ac legitimum sacramentorum ritum."

It is noteworthy that Bucchinger, while qualifying the universal Church as *Romana*, formally treats the source of its unity (*Ecclesiae Unitas unde*, p. 4) without any mention of the Pope. He attributes it exclusively to the immediate action of the Holy Ghost. "Sed unde Ecclesiae ea unitas, et sibi per omnia secula consentiens? Ex Spiritu unicae veritatis unico. Spiritum illum Christus (imago Dei inconspicui) suae Ecclesiae, non solum consolatorem, sed et rectorem, et omnigenae veritatis doctorem promisit." Compare above, p. 38.

[1] Stapleton, *Relectio scholastica*, &c. Controv. I. *de Ecclesia in se.* Qu. i, "Vox Ecclesiae nihil aliud quam universam fidelium multitudinem toto orbe dispersam significat." Qu. ii. art. 3, "Ecclesia est firmissime una per connexionem omnium membrorum tam superiorum et pastorum ipsorum immediate,

expressly distinguishing between Calvinist and Catholic definitions of the Church, states the latter as follows: "The society of those who are held together by a right faith and the sacraments [1]."

At length the mention of the Roman Pontiff began to creep into the definitions of the Church. The Dominican Bañes propounded two definitions—one by which all the baptized, orthodox and heretical alike, were included in the Church; another by which it was "A visible congregation of faithful men baptized under one head Christ in heaven, and His Vicar on earth [2]." From the time of Bellarmine the definition has always taken this form in Curialist writers. It was however a novelty, and was strongly opposed by many

quam aliorum omnium mediate, sub uno primario capite Petri successore et Christi Vicario." Qu. v. art. 1, "Ecclesia est societas Christi nomen profitentium in unitate fidei et sacramentorum collecta atque legitime ordinata."

[1] Estius in Matt. xviii: "Controversia est inter Catholicos et haereticos, quid nomine Ecclesiae intelligendum sit. Joannes Hus et eum secuti haeretici nostri temporis definiunt Ecclesiam, *Praedestinatorum universitatem*. Catholici definiunt *Societatem eorum qui per rectam fidem et sacramenta sibi mutuo cohaerent*."

[2] Bañes, *Comment.* in *Sec. Sec.* qu. i. art. 10: "Congregatio hominum fidelium baptizatorum visibilis sub uno capite Christo in caelis, et Vicario eius in terris." Ed. 1615, tom. iii. p. 45.

of the Gallican school. It is a very significant fact that the definition adopted by the English Church is practically identical with those put forward by many supporters of the Papacy, and employed by them for the express purpose of combating Calvinism.

§ 6.

After some nineteen years of independence, the Church of England submitted once more to the Roman see. The reconciliation was certainly carried out under pressure from the Crown, but none the less it seems to have been the genuine act of the Church. The very men, such as Tunstall, Gardiner, and Bonner, who had been foremost in advocating the rupture of relations, were foremost also in restoring them. They had seen the Church, during the later years of Edward VI, rushing headlong, as it seemed, into Zwinglianism and other heresies. In a sort of despair they turned to the Roman obedience as the only sure defence of unity and orthodoxy. They did not shrink from saying precisely what they had formerly denied, that the English Church had fallen from unity. In 1554 the clergy of the Province of Canterbury in Convocation addressed a petition to the bishops,

referring to their "godly forwardness . . . in the restitution of this noble Church of England to her pristine state and unity of Christ's Church, which now of late years hath been grievously infected with heresies, perverse and schismatical doctrine sown abroad in this realm by evil preachers [1]." The language is guarded, and very different from that of Pole in his *Defence of Unity*. While acknowledging a certain lapse from unity, the clergy claimed to be still members of the *noble Church of England*. It was not the essential unity of the Church that was broken, otherwise they could make no such claim; it was some external, accidental unity. We can trace what was in their mind. In the course of their petition they call the English Prayer Book a *schismatical book* [2]. In this they anticipate the language used by Cole in the discussion of 1559, when he declared that the substitution of an English for the Latin service would involve a breach of unity, a horrible schism and division. His argument shows that he meant nothing more than a serious divergence in practice from the rest of the Church [3]; his

[1] Cardwell, *Synodalia*, p. 433.
[2] Ibid. p. 434.
[3] Cardwell, *Conferences*, p. 66.

opponents answered him by asserting the right of every particular Church to vary ceremonies, arguing, with quotations from Irenaeus and Augustine, that such variation does not involve any breach of peace and unity [1]. The schism complained of in 1554 was of this nature. It meant a needless and therefore a mischievous variation from the general practice of Christendom. In 1555, when the reconciliation with Rome was effected, and the English Church was fairly in the grip of the Legate, we find a closer approximation to Curialist language. Bonner, in his declaration to the people of London concerning the reconciliation, spoke of "this noble realm of England dividing itself from the unity of the Catholic Church, and from the agreement in religion with all other Christian realms [2]." Pole, in the first decree of his Legatine Council, used similar but even more emphatic words [3]. The English Church, during the Marian reaction, undoubtedly looked to the Roman see as the centre of unity; but this was probably in regard not so much to the essential unity of

[1] Cardwell, *Conferences*, pp. 79–82.

[2] Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, vol. i. p. 170.

[3] Ibid. p. 176: "Hoc regnum, quod a corpore catholicae Ecclesiae separatum erat, iam Dei misericordia ad eius unitatem rediit."

the Church as to the practical maintenance of unity and concord in Christendom.

§ 7.

I have already shown, when speaking of the Branch Theory, that in the thirtieth canon of the Code of 1604 the English Church definitely repudiated the idea of having separated essentially from the other local Churches of the West[1]. There were great and serious differences, but these were not to be taken as involving a breach of unity.

In the same Code there is included a constitution which is often put forward as indicating that in this unity were to be included, on equal terms, the organizations created in various countries by the Protestant or Calvinist reformers. The fifty-fifth Canon requires all preachers to bid prayer in a form beginning as follows: "Ye shall pray for Christ's holy Catholick Church, that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world, and especially for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland." But, we are told, the Church of Scotland at this period was a Calvinist body, organized on a Presbyterian basis. Therefore,

[1] Above, p. 25.

according to this Canon, such bodies were to be regarded as forming regular parts of the Catholic Church. The argument is a striking instance of the transfer to other times of ideas proper to our own time. We are familiar with the long-established, permanent settlement of Presbyterianism. We readily forget that in the early seventeenth century there was no such thing. In Scotland the Church had been harried by Calvinism, precisely as the Puritans had endeavoured to harry the Church of England under Elizabeth. The whole ecclesiastical order had been thrown into confusion; the bishops were all departed, and their places were filled, if at all, by mere titular holders of the temporalities. But the Church of Scotland had not, therefore, ceased to exist. However disorganized, it was none the less rightly to be aided, alike by prayer and by more active benevolence. The same Fathers of the English Church who bade prayer for the Church of Scotland took order also, at the earliest opportunity, for supplying the Church of Scotland with what she lacked. In 1610 the titular Scottish bishops received consecration in England, and were charged with the restoration of the ruined discipline of their Church. Nor is it only by this subsequent action that

we may determine the regard in which the Church of Scotland was held when robbed of her hierarchy. A later session of the same Convocation supplies a further doctrinal witness.

In 1606 the Provincial Synods of Canterbury and York adopted a most elaborate declaration concerning the government of the Church. It was divided into three books and sixty chapters, the doctrine of each chapter being for the most part digested into a canon. Owing to the opposition of the king these canons were not promulged, but many years afterwards they were published, with their chapters, under the misleading title of *Overall's Convocation Book*. The fifth canon of the second book contains the following condemnation :—

If any man shall affirm, under colour of anything that is in the Scriptures, either that our Saviour Christ was not the head of the Church from the beginning of it ; or, that all the particular churches in the world are otherwise to be termed one Church, than as He Himself is the head of it[1], *and as all the*

[1] It would be stretching the sense of the canon too far to make it mean that this is the only mode or ground of unity. It is treating *ex professo* of the *government* of the Church, and deals with only that one element of unity. Compare the quotation from St. Thomas Aquinas given above, p. 32.

particular kingdoms in the world are called but one kingdom, as He is the only king and monarch of it; or, that our Saviour Christ hath not appointed under Him several ecclesiastical governors to rule and direct the said particular churches, as He hath appointed several kings and sovereign princes to rule and govern their several kingdoms; . . . he doth greatly err.

The unity of the Church is here made precisely parallel to the unity of human society. It depends upon the One Head, from whom inferior rulers immediately derive their authority. Unity is at once organic and hierarchical. Human society is an organic unity, of which Christ is the Head, and all princes and magistrates are His vicegerents, ruling by His authority. The Church is also an organic unity, gathered out of all mankind, of which Christ is again the one Head, and the bishops throughout the world are His vicars. In the chapter prefixed to this canon it is expressly taught that Christ Himself immediately upon the Fall of Man, "not only began the erection of that one Church, selected people, and society of believers, which ever since hath been, and so shall continue His blessed Spouse for ever; but also took upon Him thenceforth and for ever to be the sole monarch and head

of it, ruling and governing the same visibly by such priests and ministers under Him, as in His heavenly wisdom He thought fit to appoint"; and that, when the fullness of time was come, He also "did, by the direction of the Holy Ghost and ministry of His Apostles, ordain in the New Testament that there should be in every national Church some ministers of an inferior degree to instruct His people in every particular parochial church or congregation; and over them bishops of a superior degree, to have a care and inspection over many such parochial churches or congregations, for the better ordering as well of the ministers as of the people within the limits of their jurisdiction; and lastly, above them all, archbishops, and in some especial places patriarchs, who were first themselves, with the advice of some other bishops, and when kings and sovereign princes became Christians, then with their especial aid and assistance, to oversee and direct, for the better peace and government of every such national Churches, all the bishops and the rest of the particular Churches therein established[1]."

[1] *Overall's Convocation Book*, pp. 124, 128, edit. Oxford, 1844.

We may see here some crude and doubtful history. We may be amazed at the confidence with which Divine authority is claimed for the formal organization of National Churches. But the very exaggeration of the language serves to emphasize the doctrine thus publicly taught, that one only Church was established by Christ Himself, an organic whole and unity, of which the several National or Provincial Churches are only administrative divisions.

With this I conclude my survey of the public teaching of the English Church.

§ 8.

How does the existing state of Christendom answer to this teaching? What sort of unity can we recognize in the Church, so divided as we see it? Where is the one Church in which we believe? The synodical teaching which we have reviewed takes little count of existing divisions. Indeed, in the sixteenth century those divisions had not the appearance of permanence which they now have. Men were confronted, as they thought, with a passing difficulty; patience would find a solution. The continuance of division has compelled theologians to face, and gradually to answer, questions which the public teaching of the

Church passes by. It is useless to define the one Church in terms which point to nothing now visible on earth, which may correspond to the experience of some golden age in the past, or to something which the providence of God has in store for the future, but which has no relation to existing facts. What is the unity of the Church now, and how is it to be recognized? Does it exist? Is it perfect or impaired? What is needed for its perfection?

We must turn to the writings of theologians. What have we learnt during the last three centuries? We may expect to find a growing consciousness of difficulties, and if the matter is not inscrutable, then also a growing clearness of definition. I shall refer to some few writers only, choosing those who enjoy the highest reputation, and who are most characteristic of their several periods.

§ 9.

Cardinal Pole, as we have seen above, attacked Henry VIII for breaking the unity of the Church. He made it perfectly clear what he meant. In the *Apologia ad Angliae Parliamentum*, prefixed to his work on Unity, he insists that for the preservation of unity

there must be one Chief Pastor of the Church Militant, even as there is one only Head of the Church Triumphant, and this Chief Pastor is the Roman Pontiff[1]. His whole argument turns on the assumption by the king of the title of Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England, the attainment of which title he recklessly takes to be the chief object of Henry's breach with the papacy[2]. An attack delivered in this vein was not a difficult one to answer. It was easy to show that the title adopted by the king made no inroad upon the unity of the Church, but merely indicated a certain legal relation between the prince and that part of the one Church which was locally established in his dominions. Such, in fact, was the tenor of the replies actually made. Before publishing his book

[1] "Quod ad unitatem Ecclesiae attinet, ut sit unus Pastor in Ecclesia militanti ad exemplar triumphantis, quam personam Pontifex Romanus gerit." *Poli Epist.* Pars. i. p. 187.

[2] "Ut enim te supremum caput Ecclesiae in regno tuo constitueres, negasti unum in universa Ecclesia caput esse," *Pro Unitate*, fol. 3 a. edit. Argentorati, 1555. A little above he speaks of the overthrow of the papal jurisdiction as the greatest injury that could be done to the Church: "Dico igitur, dico hanc abs te iniuriam Ecclesiae inferri, qua haud scio an maior potuerit, quod suum illi caput in terris aufers, cum Pontificem Romanum unicum in terris Ecclesiae caput et Christi Vicarium negas."

Pole sent a copy of it to the king, who placed it in the hands of Tunstall for examination. Tunstall replied in a long letter to Pole, answering his chief objections, and earnestly dissuading him from publication. I am concerned here, not so much with the intrinsic value of the bishop's argument, as with his presentment of the English case. He emphatically denies the breach of unity, and shrewdly points out that Pole himself makes no attempt to prove it, but assumes it throughout.

"Your purpose," writes Tunstall, "is to bring the king's grace, by penance, home unto the Church again, as a man clearly separate from the same already. And his recess from the Church ye prove not otherwise than by the fame and common opinion of those parts; who be far from the knowledge of the truth of our affairs here, and do conjecture every man as they list (blindly) of things unknown to them.

"Ye presuppose, for a ground, the king's grace to be swerved from the unity of Christ's Church; and that in taking upon him the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England, he intendeth to separate his Church of England from the unity of the whole body of

Christendom. . . . His full purpose and intent is, to see the laws of Almighty God purely and sincerely practised and taught, and Christ's faith without blot kept and observed in his realm; and not to separate himself or his realm anywise from the unity of Christ's Catholic Church, but inviolably, at all times, to keep and observe the same, and to reduce his Church of England out of all captivity of foreign powers heretofore usurped therein, into the pristine state that all Churches of all realms were in at the beginning[1]."

Tunstall states the English position clearly enough. "We believe," he says in effect, "in the one Church, and in the unity of that Church we abide." But he does not, any more than Pole, prove his case by argument. It was the same with Henry's other apologists. Sampson accumulated precedents for the king's action from Scripture, from the acts of the councils, from ecclesiastical history. The inference was that if such action in the past had not broken the unity of the Church, neither did the king's action now. But with the fundamental question as to the true nature of ecclesiastical unity every one fenced. The

[1] Tunstall to Pole; Burnet, *Records*, Part III. book iii. no. 52 (Pocock's edition, vol. vi. p. 177 seqq.).

controversies of the Great Schism were not yet forgotten, and he was a bold man who would venture on a definition. Pole indeed had the advantage here. He did not venture on defining the unity of the Church as consisting essentially in subordination to the Roman Pontiff, but he was certainly feeling his way to this, and, as we have seen, within a few years this definition began to appear in books, and was finally adopted by all the theologians of the Roman schools. This idea was behind Pole's argument and gave it a certain coherence. His adversaries apparently had no clear idea with which to encounter it.

The same weakness appears in the defenders of the English Church for some time afterwards. They stoutly repel the charge of schism; but they do not explain the nature of the unity which they defend. Jewel, in his famous *Apologia*, has a noble passage on the one Church in which we believe, not confined like that of the Old Testament to the circumscription of a single nation, but spread throughout the world, in the sense that no part of the human race is excluded; but when he has to speak of the actual state of things he becomes at once hazy and irrelevant. He distinguishes vaguely between separating

from a part of the Church and separating from its errors and faults, without any attempt to determine the nature of the union which remains; he builds upon our unity with the whole of the Church in its best age; he has nothing to say about the corporate or organic unity of the Church that now is.

§ 10.

These were arguments of hard-pressed controversialists. Controversy was not to be silent for many years to come, but our next author is one who had the extraordinary merit of placing even trivial disputes upon a broad and philosophic foundation. Hooker, brought up under Calvinistic influences, freed himself gradually from them as he became the champion of the Church against the Puritans. In earlier days he could still speak of the invisible Church in the sense of Calvin, "that body mystical whereof Christ is the only head, that building undiscernible by mortal eyes, wherein Christ is the chief corner-stone," and contrast with it "the visible Church, the foundation whereof is the doctrine of the prophets and Apostles profest[1]." In his mature work he

[1] Sermon II. § 23. This sermon was preached in the first year of Hooker's Mastership of the Temple, 1585-6. See the note in Keble's edition of the *Works*, vol. iii. p. 483.

maintains with a wealth of argument the essential unity of the visible Church, no less than of the invisible. I will quote him at some length :—

"When we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the Church whom this doth concern is a sensibly known company. And this visible Church in like sort is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world to the last end. Which company being divided into two moieties, the one before, the other since the coming of Christ; that part, which since the coming of Christ partly hath embraced and partly shall hereafter embrace the Christian religion, we term as by a more proper name the Church of Christ. And therefore the Apostle affirmeth plainly of all men Christian, that be they Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, they are all incorporated into one company, they all make but *one body*. The unity of which visible body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord* whose servants they all profess themselves, that *one Faith* which they all acknowledge, that *one Baptism* wherewith they are all initiated. The visible Church of Jesus Christ

is therefore one, in outward profession of those things, which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man."

A little below he adds: "Although we know the Christian faith and allow of it, yet in this respect we are but entering; entered we are not into the visible Church before our admittance by the door of Baptism." He seems to allow no mark of membership in the one Church but that of *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*. "For apparent it is, that all men are of necessity either Christians or not Christians. If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible Church of Christ; and Christians by external profession they are all, whose mark of recognizance hath in it those things which we have mentioned." He argues that even heretics are in some sort, "though a maimed part, yet a part of the visible Church." Their baptism is allowed, and the honour of martyrdom is not denied them. They are separated "not altogether from the company of believers, but from the fellowship of sound believers. For where professed unbelief is, there can be no visible Church of Christ; there may be, where

sound belief wanteth." Even the act of excommunication, he says, "neither shutteth out from the mystical, nor clean from the visible, but only from fellowship with the visible in holy duties [1]."

It is clear that he here recognizes in the Church a sort of organic unity which is of God, and is altogether independent of the wills and the human actions of the individual members of the Church. He then passes on to a different aspect of unity. "For preservation of Christianity there is not anything more needful, than that such as are of the visible Church have mutual fellowship and society one with another." Here follows that passage, already quoted, in which particular Churches are compared to branches of the sea; and the visible unity of all these is further founded on the common possession of certain marks or properties. "As therefore they that are of the mystical body of Christ have those inward graces and virtues, whereby they differ from all others, which are not of the same body; again, whosoever appertain to the visible body of the Church, they have also the notes of eternal profession, whereby the world knoweth what they are: after the same

[1] *Eccl. Pol.* bk. iii. ch. i. §§ 3, 6, 7, 11, 13.

manner even the several societies of Christian men, unto every of which the name of a Church is given with addition betokening severalty, as the Church of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, England, and so the rest, must be endued with correspondent general properties belonging unto them as they are public Christian societies. And of such properties common unto all societies Christian, it may not be denied that one of the very chiefest is Ecclesiastical Polity [1]."

By this expression he means the general order and government of the Church as appointed by God [2]. Thus he makes the visible unity of the Church depend of necessity on the maintenance of lawful authority. On the constitution of this lawful authority he is not very explicit. The scope of his work did not demand this. Great as are its positive merits, Hooker's work on the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is primarily a defence of the Church of England against the Puritans. These maintained that no form of Church government is lawful or tolerable save what is explicitly set forth in Holy Scripture, and further, that all the teaching of Scripture on this point had

[1] *Eccl. Pol.* bk. iii. ch. i. § 14.
[2] Ibid. ch. ii. § 1.

been precisely ascertained and put in practice by the Calvinists of Geneva. The Genevan settlement was therefore the only tolerable form of Church order, and those bodies only which conformed to it were any part of the true visible Church of Christ. Against this contention Hooker had not to prove that any other form of government was essential; in doing so he would have fallen into the argumentative blunder of attempting to prove too much. It was sufficient for his purpose to show that all the particulars of ecclesiastical polity are not explicitly contained in Holy Scripture: many features, which are no less truly of God, may be derived from other sources. He had to defend the Catholic discipline received and established in the Church of England. It was not necessary, even if he had thought it right, to attack the Genevan discipline as actually unlawful.

It must not however be supposed that Hooker allowed unlimited freedom in this matter to particular Churches. In that case the unity of discipline would disappear. "Dissimilitude in great things," he says, "is such a thing which draweth great inconvenience after it, a thing which Christian religion must always carefully prevent. And the way

to prevent it is, not as some do imagine, the yielding up of supreme power over all Churches into one only pastor's hands; but the framing of their government, especially for matter of substance, everywhere according to the rule of one only Law, to stand in no less force than the law of nations doth, to be received in all kingdoms, all sovereign rulers to be sworn no otherwise unto it than some are to maintain the liberties, laws, and received customs of the country where they reign. This shall cause uniformity even under several dominions, without those woeful inconveniences whereunto the state of Christendom was subject heretofore, through the tyranny and oppression of that one universal Nimrod who alone did all. And, till the Christian world be driven to enter into the peaceable and true consultation about some such kind of general law concerning those things of weight and moment wherein now we differ, if one Church hath not the same order which another hath; let every Church keep as near as may be the order it should have, and commend the just defence thereof unto God[1]."

In Hooker, then, we find the elements of

[1] *Eccl. Pol.* bk. viii. ch. iii. § 5.

the Church's unity broadly sketched, but not worked out in detail. Beginning with unity in the worship of *one Lord*, the unity of *one Faith* professed by all in common, and the sacramental unity of *one Baptism*, he proceeds to the unity of government by which the Christian society is held together. He may seem, however, to have recognized in the one Faith only those truths, the denial of which would fasten upon a man the name, not so much of heretic, but rather of apostate or infidel. So too, while asserting a necessary unity of government, he does not treat the form of such government as specifically determined by the divine law; he rather suggests that particular Churches, if they adhere to certain general principles, may vary it in details even of some importance.

§ 11.

Hooker holds an unique position in modern English theology, a position due partly to his philosophic breadth of mind, partly to those very circumstances which induced a certain incompleteness in his work. His special task was to turn the tide of Calvinism which threatened to overwhelm the Church. He did not, however, stand alone; there were others

about him to fill up the gaps of his teaching. Already, four years before his great work appeared, Bancroft had preached the famous sermon on the Trying of Spirits, in which he asserted the episcopal government of the Church to be of divine right. Almost simultaneously with the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* appeared the kindred work of Bilson on *The Perpetual Government of Christ's Church,* in which the same principle was strenuously maintained. But beyond all his contemporaries Hooker made an impress on English ways of thinking which has never been effaced. His temper in controversy, no doubt, had much to do with this. He was recognized from the first as the "Judicious." He set the form of thinking, even where he failed to supply the matter; the forces of the Church were marshalled against Calvinism, and the issues were clearly joined.

Hooker died with the sixteenth century. During the forty years that followed, the fruits of his work were ripened. I shall make only one brief citation from a writer who sums up, more perfectly perhaps than any other, the teaching of the time. Hammond, the chaplain of Charles I, was among the most faithful and devoted disciples of

the Laudian school. At the great crisis of the Church of England, in the year 1644, he published his *Practical Catechism,* in which we read as follows:—

"The word 'catholic' signifies 'universal,' dispersed or extended all the world over; in opposition to the former state of the Jewish Church, which was an inclosure divided from all the world beside, in time of the law; whereas now the gospel is preached to all the world, and, by those powers of the Holy Ghost forementioned, a Church with all those ministrations in it is constituted over all the world. This Church is a society of believers, ruled and continued according to those ordinances, with the use of the Sacraments, preaching of the word, censures, &c., under bishops or pastors, succeeding those on whom the Holy Ghost came down, and (by receiving ordination of those that had that power before them, i. e. of the bishops of the Church, the continued successors of the Apostles) lawfully called to those offices." So far in theory. Then he asks, "What is the practical part of this belief?" To this he answers: "The living peaceably, charitably, faithfully, and obediently within the fold of the universal Church, yielding all reverence to the decrees

and doctrines of it; and in every particular or national Church, 'obeying them that have the rule over us,' labouring to preserve both unity of faith and charity with all our fellow-brethren, both in that and all other particular Churches; and not breaking into factions, parties, divisions, subdivisions; but labouring our utmost to approve ourselves holy members of that holy Catholic Church, by unity, charity, brotherly love, ensuing and contending for peace, and all other branches of Christian purity[1]."

It is clear that Hammond regarded the essential unity of the Church as founded mainly in uniformity of government and the common use of the sacraments. Unity of faith, as of mutual charity, he seems to place rather among the objects of the Christian life, to be earnestly desired and carefully sought, than among those properties by which the one Church may be discerned. This way of thinking was common to most English theologians of the time. They insisted much upon the corporate organization of the Church; careful attention to the form of public worship, strict observance of canonical order, would

[1] Hammond,' *Pract. Cat.* lib. v. sect. iv. pp. 329, 330, ed. 1847.

have the effect of bringing men to a right faith as well; they hardly regarded the possibility of any Church retaining the apostolic discipline and yet losing the faith. Recognizing no rule in the Church but that of the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, they judged all men who were duly subject to their own bishop in their own particular Church to be fully established in the universal Church as well; the bishops of the several Churches throughout the world were, potentially at least, united in one supreme senate ruling the whole Church of Christ.

The perfect realization of this ideal, at least in England and the associated kingdoms, was the aim of Laud and his followers. The religious unity of the nation, based on strict ecclesiastical uniformity, was first to be secured. The aid of the secular arm was freely invoked; it was the duty of the Christian prince to secure this unity within his dominions. When this was done, the three national Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, bound together with intimate communion, were to exhibit to the world a pattern of wider unity, and the divisions of Christendom were to be healed by the universal application of the same

principle. In the meanwhile, if practice was to be uniform, opinion was to be free. The great verities of the Christian faith must not be impugned; fierce and heated controversy ought, perhaps, to be stifled; but there must be no undue forcing of thought—above all, no proscription of opinion; men must agree to differ, and, differing, to live together in unity. The ecclesiastical rigour of Laud was crossed by a remarkable breadth in the matter of doctrine.

This was the weakness of his school. Too little account was taken of the passion with which men, orthodox or heretical, will press their beliefs. Too little importance was attributed to the right faith which alone can bind men together in the supernatural society of the Church. The uprising of Calvinism, no less against the Laudian toleration than against the Laudian strictness, proved this in part. The lamentable state into which the English Church was at once reduced proved it for the rest. The objective notion of the Church which had seemed adequate in prosperity was found wanting in the day of ruin. Theologians could not abide by it. They no longer had before their eyes a great and splendid house in which there was visibly

room for vessels not only of gold and silver but also of wood and earth, some to honour, some to dishonour. They could no longer dream of a whole nation bound in one sacred society under the rulers of the Church. The house was fallen; they saw the nation miserably deceived and divided, the bishops murdered, imprisoned, hiding, or driven to exile. Triumphant sectaries were trampling all ecclesiastical order under foot; the Calvinist discipline was in part established, in part made way for mere anarchy; no vestige of orthodox rule or worship was even tolerated. Where was now that National Church which proclaimed itself an integral part of the Universal Church, and as such demanded the allegiance of all Christian men within the nation? In what fashion did the Church of England still exist? Was it in exile, with the scattered bishops here and there exercising their pastoral function with doubtful right beyond their own borders? Was it in hiding at home, where some few priests, amid the general defection, ministered as they could in timorous and scanty gatherings of the faithful? How did the actual state of the Church stand with the theory?

§ 12.

The pressure of this question had a remarkable effect on English theologians. They were not cowed by their misfortunes; on the contrary, in the time of worst oppression, they were roused to extraordinary efforts. Some of the greatest works of English theology belong to this period; and in these writings there is a tone, not of bitterness, such as persecution often engenders, but of breadth and sympathy beyond what is found in the previous age. There is a firm conviction that the Church of England will be raised up again from her misery, and at the same time, a wider outlook over the whole Catholic Church, their membership in which men prized the more in proportion as their own particular Church was forlorn. Bramhall, pursued by the dominant faction with a hatred second only to that which fell upon Laud, was derided as "the advocate of a dead Church." It was dead, he replied, "even as the trees are dead in winter, when they want their leaves; or as the sun is set, when it is behind a cloud; or as the gold is destroyed, when it is melting in the furnace. When I see a seed cast into the ground, I do not ask where is

the greenness of the leaves? where is the beauty of the flowers? where is the sweetness of the fruit? but I expect all these in their due season. Stay awhile, and behold the catastrophe. The rain is fallen, the wind hath blown, and the floods have beaten upon their Church; but it is not fallen, for it is founded upon a rock. The light is under a bushel, but it is not extinguished. And if God in justice should think fit to remove our candlestick, yet the Church of England is not dead, whilst the Catholic Church survives[1]."

It was in 1654, when the fortunes of the Church of England were at their lowest ebb, that Bramhall published his *Just Vindication*[2]. An opponent might well sneer at him as the champion of a dead Church. It seemed superfluous to defend the Church of England against the charge of schism, when the Church of England no longer existed; when, as her enemies might say, she had received her deserts, when sentence and execution had gone forth against her. But for Bramhall she lived

[1] *Replication to the Bishop of Chalcedon.* *Works*, vol. ii. p. 95. Oxford, 1842.

[2] *A Just Vindication of the Church of England from the unjust aspersion of Criminal Schism.* *Works*, vol. i. p. 84.

and claimed his allegiance. In rebutting the charge of schism he had occasion to define the unity which to rend were criminal; and therefore we shall find in this treatise something to our purpose.

He goes far beyond the conception of the numerical unity of the Church, or of the local unity by which the Christians of any place are gathered into one society. The Church is to be united as well as one. "Schism is an exterior breach, or a solution of continuity, in the body ecclesiastic." According to the several modes of union there are several forms of schism. "Consider," he says, "by what nerves and ligaments the body of the Church is united and knit together, and by so many manner of ruptures it may be schismatically rent or divided asunder." He then passes without comment from the term *unity* to the term *communion*, which he uses in the same sense; and he distinguishes the communion of the Catholic Church as partly internal, partly external.

"The internal communion consists principally in these things: to believe the same entire substance of saving necessary truth revealed by the Apostles, and to be ready implicitly in the preparation of the mind to

embrace all other supernatural verities when they shall be sufficiently proposed to them; to judge charitably one of another; to exclude none from the Catholic communion and hope of salvation, either eastern, or western, or southern, or northern Christians, which profess the ancient faith of the Apostles and primitive Fathers, established in the first general Councils, and comprehended in the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds; to rejoice at their well-doing; to sorrow for their sins; to condole with them in their sufferings; to pray for their constant perseverance in the true Christian Faith, for their reduction from all their respective errors, and their re-union to the Church in case they be divided from it, that we may be all one sheepfold under that One Great 'Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls'; and lastly, to hold an actual external communion with them '*in votis*'—in our desires, and to endeavour it by all those means which are in our power. This internal communion is of absolute necessity among all Catholics.

"External communion consists, first, in the same Creeds or Symbols or Confessions of Faith, which are the ancient badges or cognizances of Christianity; secondly, in the participation

of the same sacraments; thirdly, in the same external worship, and frequent use of the same Divine Offices or Liturgies or forms of serving God; fourthly, in the use of the same public rites and ceremonies; fifthly, in giving communicatory letters from one Church or one person to another; and, lastly, in admission of the same discipline, and subjection to the same supreme ecclesiastical authority, that is, Episcopacy, or a general Council: for as single Bishops are the Heads of particular Churches, so Episcopacy, that is, a general Council, or Occumenical assembly of Bishops, is the Head of the universal Church [1]."

This external communion is not, says Bramhall, of the like necessity with the internal. It may obviously be suspended by the just censures of the Church. "And as external communion may be suspended, so likewise it may sometimes be waived or withdrawn by particular Churches or persons from their neighbour Churches or Christians in their innovations and errors." And further the most complete external communion does not imply uniformity in all opinions, even upon matters of the gravest moment. "The Roman and African Churches held good communion

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 103, 104.

one with another, whilst they differed both in judgement and practice about rebaptization [1]."

We must follow him as he comes to the pith of his special controversy. "If any particular Patriarch, Prelate, Church, or Churches, how eminent soever, shall endeavour to obtrude their own singularities upon others for Catholic verities, or shall enjoin sinful duties to their subjects, or shall violate the undoubted privileges of their inferiors contrary to the canons of the Fathers; it is very lawful for their own subjects to disobey them, and for strangers to separate from them. And if either the one or the other have been drawn to partake of their errors upon pretence of obedience or of Catholic communion, they may without the guilt of schism, nay they ought, to reform themselves, so as it be done by lawful authority, upon good grounds, with due moderation, without excess, or the violation of charity; and so as the separation from them be not total, but only in their errors and innovations; nor perpetual, but only during their distempers:—as a man might leave his father's or his brother's house, being infected with the plague, with a purpose to return thither again so soon as it was cleansed.

[1] *Works*, vol. i. pp. 104. 106.

This is no more than what Gerson hath taught us in sundry places: 'It is lawful by the law of nature to resist the injury and violence of a Pope[1];' and, 'if any one should convert his Papal dignity to be an instrument of wickedness to the destruction of any part of the Church in temporalities or spiritualities, and if there appears no other remedy but by withdrawing oneself from the obedience of such a raging power, . . . until the Church or a Council shall provide otherwise; it is lawful[2].' He adds further, that 'it is lawful to slight his sentences,' yea, 'to tear them in pieces, and throw them at his head[3].'

"Bellarmine in effect saith as much:—'As it is lawful to resist the Pope, if he should invade our bodies; so it is lawful to resist him invading of souls, or troubling the commonwealth; and much more if he should endeavour to destroy the Church; I say it is lawful to resist him by not doing that which he commands and by hindering him from

[1] *Regulae Morales, tit. De Praecept. Decalog.* [Bramhall's reference: the Oxford Ed. adds; Op. P. ii. fol. 131. Paris, 1521.]

[2] *Lib. de Auferibilitate Papae, Consider.* 14 [Op. P. i. fol. 35.]

[3] *De Unit. Eccles., Consider.* 10. [Op. P. i. fol. 38. "Possunt occurrere casus, in quibus . . . liceret, &c."]

putting his will in execution[1].' We ask no more. The Pope invaded our souls by enacting new oaths and obtruding new articles of Faith; he troubled the commonwealth with his extortions and usurpations; he destroyed the Church by his provisions, reservations, exemptions, &c. We did not judge him, or punish him, or depose him, or exercise any jurisdiction over him; but only defended ourselves by guarding his blows and repelling his injuries[2]."

A careful reader will note a certain omission in Bramhall's argument. Both the internal and the external communion of which he speaks are alike elements of a moral, not of a natural unity. They are alike to be upheld as a matter of duty, the former in all cases, the latter where possible. We do not here touch the essential unity of the Church—its unity as an organism. Bramhall transcends, as I have said, the idea of numerical unity; does he ignore it? Numerical oneness is a necessary element in the full presentment of the Church's Unity. We believe in *One Church*. The unity of which we have heard Bramhall speaking might be the unity

[1] *De Roman. Pontif.* lib. ii. c. 29. [Op. tom. i. p. 820, A.]

[2] Bramhall, *Works*, vol. i. pp. 106, 107.

of essentially separate bodies, united in some sort by a complicated system of communication.

It is impossible to suppose that such was Bramhall's idea. There is abundant evidence to the contrary both elsewhere and close at hand. The Catholic Church, he says, is *totum homogeneum*, and for this reason only "every particular Church and every particular person of this Catholic communion doth participate of the same name inclusively, so as to be justly called Catholic Churches and Catholic Christians[1]." He had occasion afterwards to justify what seemed to be the particularism of his *Vindication*. "No man can justly blame me," he says, "for honouring my spiritual mother the Church of England; in whose womb I was conceived, at whose breasts I was nourished, and in whose bosom I hope to die. . . . If I have had any bias, it hath been desire of peace, which our common Saviour left as a legacy to His Church; that I might live to see the re-union of Christendom, for which I shall always bow the 'knees of my heart' to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Howsoever it be, I submit myself and my poor endeavours, first, to the judge-

[1] Bramhall, *Works*, vol. i. p. 109.

ment of the Catholic Oecumenical essential Church; which if some of late days have endeavoured to hiss out of the schools as a fancy, I cannot help it. From the beginning it was not so. And if I should mistake the right Catholic Church out of human frailty or ignorance . . . I do implicitly and in the preparation of my mind submit myself to the true Catholic Church, the spouse of Christ, the mother of the Saints, the pillar of truth. And seeing my adherence is firmer to the infallible rule of Faith, that is, the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church, than to mine own private judgement or opinions; although I should unwittingly fall into an error, yet this cordial submission is an implicit retractation thereof, and I am confident will be so accepted by the Father of Mercies, both from me and all others who seriously and sincerely do seek after peace and truth. Likewise I submit myself to the representative Church, that is, a free general Council, or so general as can be procured; and until then, to the Church of England, wherein I was baptized, or to a national English Synod: to the determination of all which, and each of them respectively, according to the distinct degrees of their authority, I yield a conformity

and compliance, or at the least, and to the lowest of them, an acquiescence[1]."

Bramhall then by no means lost sight of the essential unity of the Church, but the conduct of his argument put that thought in the background. The stress of the times, the miserable overthrow into which her precarious, if splendid, isolation seemed to have brought the Church of England, the obvious difficulty of resisting heresy with the forces of a divided Church, led him to insist on the paramount need of a moral unity. His argument might have been sounder had he based the need more clearly upon the essential unity, of which moral unity is the right manifestation. Hooker, going always to the root of the matter, in like circumstances would probably have done so; but Bramhall, if a better theologian, was a worse philosopher, and therefore his conclusions have not that air of absolute finality which, in spite of all omissions, characterizes the work of Hooker.

He was not alone in this limitation. The circumstances of the time pressed moral considerations to the front. Thorndike also stood on this ground. "I maintain," he said, "that the Church, by divine institution, is in point

[1] *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 21-2.

of right one visible body, consisting in the communion of all Christians, in the offices of God's service; and ought, by human administration, in point of fact to be the same." Unity is here regarded purely as a matter of right. Yet the One Church has a voice, a judgement, in fact as well as in right. "Owning, therefore," he adds, "my obligation to the whole Church—notwithstanding my obligation to the Church of England—I have prescribed the consent thereof, for a boundary to all interpretation of Scripture, all reformation in the Church[1]."

It is the almost inevitable fault of controversial treatment to be thus incomplete. Attention is concentrated on the actually disputed point. The numerical unity of the Church was not at this time challenged, unless by the more extreme Independents. All were agreed as to the oneness of the true Church; its boundaries and marks were in dispute. In controversial writings this numerical unity is taken for granted. It is only in the positive teaching of a trained theologian, covering the whole field, that we should expect to see it formally treated, and laid square and firm as the foundation of moral unity. We have this

[1] Thorndike, *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 6 and 7. Oxford, 1845.

positive teaching in the work of Pearson on the Creed.

§ 13.

Through the worst years of the Calvinist oppression Pearson continued to lecture at St. Clement's, Eastcheap, where he delivered those discourses which he afterwards published as *An Exposition of the Creed*. The very conditions of the time, and the caution which they imposed, were favourable to the positive treatment of the subject. Pearson dealt with the broad, solid foundations of Christian faith and practice; so far as he treated the controversies of the time at all, it was by establishing the underlying principles on which they turned. For this reason his work never grows old; it remains, like that of Hooker, an imperishable possession of the English Church. It is even more solid and homogeneous, for the greater and more luminous passages of Hooker are imbedded in a mass of forgotten controversy, trivial and tiresome, while Pearson's argument deals throughout with fundamental verities.

Expounding the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed, *The holy Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints*; although there is here no

express mention of the note of unity, he nevertheless treats it with great fullness [1]. The Church is One; and the existence of this Church is a fact. "For when I say, *I believe in the Holy Catholick Church*, I mean that there is a Church which is Holy, and which is Catholick." He begins with the origin of the Christian Church, when the Apostles gathered into their fellowship "*the multitude of them that believed*, who *were of one heart and one soul*." Thus he establishes the definition of the Church from the beginning. But he then observes that the oneness of the Apostolic Church at Jerusalem differs in a way from the oneness of the Church in which we believe; for "that Church, which was one by way of origination, was afterwards divided into many, the actual members of that one becoming the members of several Churches," whereas the Church in which we believe is "one by way of complexion, receiving the members of all Churches into it." So in the language of the

[1] He notes in the margin that it was expressed in some of the most ancient forms of the Creed. Cyril of Jerusalem has it, *εἰς μίαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν*. Alexander of Alexandria gives an emphatic form in his Confession; *μίαν καὶ μόνην καθολικὴν τὴν ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν*. *Theodoret. Hist.* l. 2. c. 4. It is of course contained in our Nicene Creed.

New Testament the word *Church* has a double use. "Sometimes it admitteth of distinction and plurality; sometimes it reduceth all into conjunction and unity. Sometimes the Churches of God are diversified as many; sometimes, as many as they are, they are all comprehended in one."

It will be observed that Pearson treats the many Churches of the New Testament as divisions of the One Church founded in Jerusalem. He goes on to show that these divisions are purely local, and establishes the unity of each local Church within itself. "When the Scripture speaketh of any country where the Gospel had been preached, it nameth always by way of plurality the Churches of that country [1], as the Churches of Judaea, of Samaria, and Galilee, the Churches of Syria and of Cilicia, the Churches of Galatia, the Churches of Asia, the Churches of Macedonia [2]. But notwithstanding there were

[1] Gal. i. 22; Acts ix. 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19; Rev. i. 11; 1 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Cor. viii. 1.

[2] It is obvious that on this principle it would be more accurate to speak of the *Churches of England* than of the *Church of England*. Pearson would probably have replied that by ancient custom and by legal constitution the various Churches of England are bound together in a special unity of their own.

several such Churches or Congregations of believers in great and populous cities, yet the Scriptures always speak of such Congregations in the notion of one Church. As when St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *Let your women keep silence in the Churches;* yet the dedication of his Epistle is, *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.* So we read not of the Churches, but the Church at Jerusalem, the Church at Antioch, the Church at Caesarea, the Church at Ephesus, the Church of the Thessalonians, the Church of Laodicea, the Church of Smyrna, the Church of Pergamus, the Church of Thyatira, the Church of Sardis, the Church of Philadelphia[1]. From whence it appeareth that a collection of several Congregations, every one of which is in some sense a Church, and may be called so, is properly one Church by virtue of the subordination of them all in one government under one ruler. For thus in those great and populous cities where Christians were very numerous, not only all the several Churches within the cities, but those also in the adjacent parts, were united under the care and inspection of one Bishop, and therefore was

[1] Acts viii. 1; xiii. 1; xviii. 22; xx. 17; 1 Thess. i. 1; Col. iv. 16; Rev. ii. and iii.

accounted one Church; the number of the Churches following the number of the Angels, that is, the rulers of them, as is evident in the Revelation."

This was, of course, urged against the English Presbyterians and Independents; but with Pearson it was much more than a controversial point. He was going to the foundation of the idea of unity. He has proceeded from the unity of the original Church at Jerusalem to the multiplicity of Churches throughout the world; he has ascertained the principle of internal unity in each of these; he now returns to establish by this same principle the essential unity of the whole Catholic Church.

"Now as several Churches are reduced to the denomination of one Church, in relation to the single governor of those many Churches, so all the Churches of all cities and all nations in the world may be reduced to the same single denomination in relation to one supreme governor of them all, and that one governor is *Christ* the Bishop of our souls[1]. Wherefore the Apostle, speaking of that in which all Churches do agree, comprehendeth them all under the same appellation of one

[1] Compare the Canon of 1606, above, p. 52, and note.

Church; and therefore often by the name of Church are understood all Christians whatsoever belonging to any of the Churches dispersed through the distant and divided parts of the world. For the single persons possessing faith in Christ are members of the particular Churches in which they live, and all those particular Churches are members of the general and universal Church which is one by unity of aggregation; and this is the Church in the Creed which we believe, and which is in other Creeds expressly termed *One—I believe in one Holy Catholick Church.*"

Aggregation, in itself, might be the gathering of essentially separate bodies, but Pearson has guarded against this misunderstanding by showing that the various Churches, which are thus aggregated, are themselves but local divisions of the Church originally founded in unity. And further they are aggregated, not by any action of their own, but by virtue of their proper relation to the one Head, which is Christ. This at once shows that something more than numerical unity is intended; but so far nothing more is expressed, and thus Pearson grounds all which follows upon that numerical unity. The unity of the Church of which he now proceeds to speak

is the expression of the natural and essential oneness of the Church. He does not expressly note this distinction, but it is inherent in his argument. "It will be further necessary," he says, "for the understanding of the nature of the Church which is thus one, to consider in what that unity doth consist." It is not then a mere aggregation. He turns back to the one Church as constituted in the beginning, and asks in what respect it was one. "We may collect," he says, "from their union and agreement how all other Churches are united and agree." And what do we find there. "They were described to be believing and baptized persons, converted to the faith by St. Peter, continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers. These then were all built upon the same Rock, all professed the same faith, all received the same sacraments, all performed the same devotions, and thereby were all reputed members of the same Church."

Starting from this he proceeds to enumerate six modes of the unity of the Church *considered in itself*. This limitation is important, and rather obscure. He means a unity "beside that of the Head, which is one Christ,

and the life communicated from that Head, which is one Spirit." This latter we may perhaps distinguish, with other authors. as the *invisible* unity of the Church. By the unity of the Church, *considered in itself*, Pearson means a kind of social unity, which is, at least in some measure, visible. The six modes of this unity are as follows:—

1. In the first place the Church is one in respect of *Origin*. There is but one Foundation, which is Christ, and in so far as the Apostles are called the foundation, yet they are united by the one Corner-stone. Upon this foundation "was the first Church built, and whosoever have been, or ever shall be converted to the true Christian faith, are and shall be added to that Church, and laid upon the same foundation, which is the unity of origination. Our Saviour gave the same power to all the Apostles, which was to found the Church; but He gave that power to Peter, to show the unity of the same Church [1]."

[1] He quotes in the margin the well-known passage of St. Cyprian, *de Unitate*, c. 4: "Et quamvis Apostolis omnibus post resurrectionem suam parem potestatem tribuat, et dicat, *Sicut misit me Pater, et ego mitto vos*, &c., tamen ut unitatem manifestaret, unitatis eiusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuit. Hoc erant utique et ceteri Apostoli,

2. In the second place he puts the *Unity of Faith*. "The Church is therefore one, though the members be many, because they all agree in one faith. . . . They which believe the same doctrine delivered by Christ to all the Apostles, delivered by all the Apostles to believers, being all professors of the same faith must be members of the same Church."

3. Next he advances the *Unity of the Sacraments*. "Many persons and Churches, howsoever distinguished by time or place, are considered as one Church, because they acknowledge and receive the same sacraments. the signs and badges of the people of God. . . . All believing persons, and all Churches congregated in the Name of Christ, washed in the same Laver of Regeneration, eating of the same Bread, and drinking of the same Cup, are united in the same cognizance, and so known to be the same Church."

4. Thence he passes to the *Unity of Hope*. "Whosoever belongeth to any Church is some

quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio praediti et honoris et potestatis, sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur, ut Ecclesia una monstretur." This he interprets: "For whereas all the rest of the Apostles had equal power and honour with St. Peter, yet Christ did particularly give that power to St. Peter, to show the unity of the Church which he intended to build upon the foundation of the Apostles"

way called; and all which are so, are *called in one hope of their calling.*"

5. Then follows naturally the *Unity of Charity*, which Pearson finds not so much in outward acts of mutual kindness, as in a certain inward and spiritual bond of common life. "They which are all of one mind, whatsoever the number of their persons be, are in reference to that mind but one; as all the members, howsoever different, yet being animated by one soul, become one body."

6. Lastly, the Church is one in the *Unity of Discipline and Government*, "by virtue whereof the same Christ ruleth in them all. For they have all the same pastoral guides appointed, authorized, sanctified, and set apart by the appointment of God, by the direction of the Spirit, to direct and lead the people of God in the same way of eternal salvation: as therefore there is no Church where there is no order, no ministry; so where the same order and ministry is, there is the same Church." Here he inevitably quotes in the margin the two well-known passages from St. Cyprian, *Episcopatus unus est, cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur;* and *Cum sit a Christo una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa, item*

Episcopatus unus Episcoporum multorum concordi numerositate diffusus[1]. These quotations fill up what would otherwise be a gap in the text, and identify the *order* and *ministry* which are essential to the unity of the Church.

Such is the unity which Pearson finds in the Catholic Church. Nor is it only in theory that he regards the Church as thus one; as an object of faith it is really existent. "For when I profess and say, *I believe a Church*, it is not only an acknowledgment of a Church which hath been, or of a Church which shall be, but also of that which is." This Church is indefectible, not so much by virtue of its own nature, as by reason of the promise of God; and this promise relates not to each several part of the Church, but to the whole. A particular Church may fail and its candlestick be removed. "But though the providence of God doth suffer many particular Churches to cease, yet the promise of the same God will never permit that all of them at once shall perish."

§ 14.

If we critically examine this teaching of Pearson, we shall see that he is speaking throughout of the essential unity of the

[1] Cyprian, *de Unitate*, c. 5; *Epist.* lv. 24.

Church. He is dealing with it, to use his own language, as an *Object of Faith*. It has therefore an objective reality. But neither is this a purely invisible reality; for it is not so much the actual existence of the one Church which is propounded as the object of faith, but rather its perpetual existence to the end of time, according to the promise of God. The unity of the Church is a visible reality, an object of human knowledge, which is seen by faith to be indefectible. Pearson, expounding the objective realities of the Creed, is not concerned with the moral unity of the Church—the unity which depends on human agency conforming to the purpose of God. We shall understand this the better if we bring into comparison what he says about the Holiness of the Church. This is not a holiness which ought to be, and may be, which is to be striven for and attained; nor yet are there two Churches, "one, in which good and bad are mingled together, another in which there are good alone"; but "the Church of God is universally holy in respect of all, by institutions and administrations of sanctity." In like manner the unity of which he speaks is not a unity that we are to strive after and to pray for. It is the essential unity in which the Church is

constituted by the Word of God. And this is not a mere abstract numerical unity. The Church is not only one ; she is also united. She is held together by bonds, partly visible, as her origin, the sacraments, and the Episcopate ; partly invisible—the bonds of faith, and hope, and charity. It will follow, though the inference was beside the scope of Pearson's work, that just as the practical holiness of the Church, however imperfect, is the expression of her essential and inherent holiness, so also the moral unity of the Church is the expression more or less perfect, more or less visible, of her indefectible essential unity.

§ 15.

So Pearson taught in the days of oppression. He may be said to have definitely fixed the colour of English theology on this subject. There are questions which he did not touch, practical difficulties with which he did not concern himself, but for the solution of all these it has been found necessary only to apply the principles laid down by Pearson.

At the time when he wrote, the actual circumstances of England were in flagrant conflict with his theory. But the anarchy was nearly at an end. Within a few months,

with dramatic suddenness, the restoration of order in Church and State was complete. Rarely has there been such a simple renewal of broken institutions. The surviving bishops resumed the administration of their dioceses; the vacancies were filled at once; the disorder of twenty years was treated as a mere episode. What rendered this possible was the fact that a clear and definite foundation of theory had been laid. The confusion of thought consequent upon the breaking up of mediaeval ideas in the crisis of the Reformation had now passed away. The conception of the Church as an organic body realizing its life in local, provincial, or national organizations, which in the minds of the Laudian school had been too closely identified with the mere accidents of the English political system, was now purified by the failure of those accidents. It was not indeed shaken altogether free from them on their revival, but it was at least separable from them. Indeed the ecclesiastical system was revived more whole and entire than the civil: and its independence was thus more clearly discerned. During the latter part of the seventeenth century the English Church enjoyed a freedom of activity such as had never, perhaps, been known before.

The bishops then set to work vigorously to realize the ideal of the Church as now conceived, and statesmen, from whatever motive, were ranged at their side. The local unity of the Church within the borders of the nation was to be firmly established. Uniformity of practice was not only enforced, as never before, on the actual ministers of the Church, but any separate activity was rigidly suppressed. The new dissent, which sprang from the repression of the older nonconformity, was prosecuted with inquisitorial zeal. Nor was this care for orthodoxy narrowly confined to a mere nationalism. A new episcopate was forced on the reluctant Calvinism of Scotland, to bring that nation also into the unity of the Church. Towards the Calvinists of France and the Netherlands the attitude of many English divines was perplexing and inconsequent. Political ties and the danger of a common enemy had formerly associated them closely with England; they had been commonly acknowledged as forming substantially a part of the Catholic Church, though denuded of much that was essential to the true order of the Church. The stress of the conflict with Calvinism at home, and the more definite insistence on the notes of

the true Church which followed, made this attitude all but impossible. Political sympathy also was broken by the rivalry and the growing strength of Holland. Rome and Geneva were now alike enemies [1], and foreign Calvinism became as distasteful as the home-bred dissent. There was, however, this difference. The Calvinists of France were regarded as having some good grounds for withdrawing from the communion of bishops who allowed most of the errors of the Roman See; the English Calvinists were supposed to have no defence at all for rebellion against their bishops. We have to read with this caution the emphatic assertion of the rights of the Episcopate by English theologians of the period.

Their attitude towards the Roman Church, on the other hand, was perfectly simple and consistent, though their language varied considerably in intensity. The Roman Church and all the Churches subject to the Papacy were regarded as indisputably parts of the

[1] See Beveridge's *Oratio Canonica* in his *Thesaurus Theologicus*, vol. ii. p. 340, ed. Oxford, 1816: "Faxit ut Ecclesia nostra, vel potius sua, magis magisque indies stabiliatur, floreatque. Faxit, ut nec Romae, nec Genevae, nec ipsae inferorum portae adversus eam unquam praevaleant." This sermon was preached in one of the years 1679–80–81.

Catholic Church[1]. Yet there was little desire for closer union, or even for any intimate relations with them. They seemed to be full of corruption, doctrinal and practical. Above all, the claims of the Roman See barred the way, and the profound conviction that the Roman Court was bent on making good those claims by force awakened a frenzy of antagonism. Popery became the nightmare of the English people, and the gravest divines were not free from a certain obsession with regard to it. The period of the Popish Plot, of the Exclusion Bill, and of the intrigues which gathered about the person of James II, was not one for a fair and profitable

[1] We must except those who use the word *Catholic* as implying perfect orthodoxy. Beveridge, in the sermon just quoted, delivered amid the excitement of the Popish Plot, to which he makes an acrid allusion, fiercely denies the *Catholicity* of the Roman Church (*Thesaurus Theologicus*, vol. ii. p. 335): "At vero Romana ista Ecclesia, in cuius fidem moresque Pontificii omnes iurati sunt, tot nova dogmata adinvenit, totque novos ritus Ecclesiae universali vel reiectos vel incognitos nuper instituit, hodieque imperat, ut vix Ecclesiae Christianae, nisi forsitan corruptissimae, nedum Catholicae nomen mereatur. Nihil enim cum Catholica, nihil cum omnibus aliis Ecclesiis commune habet, sed omnia potius diversa et contraria, praeter ea in quibus cum Anglicana consentit." Yet even here, with his *vix Ecclesiae Christianae* he grudgingly allows the substantial inclusion of the Roman Church in the universal Church of Christ:

discussion of the Roman controversy. Yet Barrow was able to treat it with candour and with some approach to courtesy. The interest taken by English divines in the conflict about the Gallican liberties led to a clearer distinction between the Papacy and the Churches subject to it. This culminated in the well-known attempt of Wake to detach the French Church bodily from the Papacy and to bring it into line with the Church of England. The attempt failed through causes operating on both sides, but it is of lasting interest as the only step seriously undertaken, before the apathy of the eighteenth century was complete, towards the realization of that conception of a united Church which occupied the minds of English theologians. Accepting the national organization of Christendom as an accomplished fact, standing to the order of the Church much as the provincial organization of the Roman Empire stood in the fourth century, they would draw the national Churches together, not as separate bodies politic joined in a federal union, but as already parts of an existing but disorganized unity. The Papacy they regarded as a chief cause of the prevailing confusion. The Churches of Christendom must break with the Papacy before

they could become effectively united. United in reality they were, though not in effect. The note originally struck by Tunstall was maintained. The English Church was not separated from Catholic unity, nor was any Church that might follow her example. On the contrary, this was the only way to perfect unity. Every national Church must be reduced "out of all captivity of foreign powers heretofore usurped therein, into the pristine state that all Churches of all realms were in at the beginning[1]." Then only could the original unity of the Church be completely restored.

§ 16.

To those who regard the Papacy as the divinely appointed instrument of unity, or even to those who think of it as the best practical guardian of unity, this will seem the wildest paradox. I am not here concerned to criticize or to defend it; I merely propound it as the characteristic opinion of English theologians from the seventeenth century onward.

The half-century following the Restoration was for the English Church a period of extraordinary learning and literary activity. Out of the mass of material available I shall make

[1] Above, p. 59.

a small number of typical citations. We naturally turn first to Barrow, as the author of a formal treatise on the Unity of the Church. He shows his sense of the importance of his theme by prefixing to it as a motto the saying of St. Augustine: *Non habet caritatem Dei, qui ecclesiae non diligit unitatem*[1]. He allows, in almost the same terms as Hooker[2], the distinction between "the true universal Church, called the Church mystical and invisible," and "the visible Church Catholic here on earth." The former is "the catholic society of true believers and faithful servants of Christ, diffused through all ages, dispersed through all countries, whereof part doth sojourn on earth, part doth reside in heaven, part is not yet extant; but all whereof is described in the register of divine preordination, and shall be re-collected at the resurrection of the just." This is absolutely and indefectibly united. The latter is "the society of those who at present or in course of time profess the faith and gospel of Christ, and undertake the evangelical covenant." This latter "doth enfold the other, as one mass doth contain the good ore and base alloy; as one floor the corn

[1] Aug. *de Bapt.* 3.

[2] See above, p. 61.

and the chaff; as one field the wheat and the tares; as one net the choice fish and the refuse; as one fold the sheep and the goats; as one tree the living and the dry branches." The visible Church must therefore correspond to the "true universal," and the same attributes are "by analogy and participation" assigned to it. This, therefore, is also united, and "the question is, Wherein the unity of it doth consist, or upon what grounds it is called one; being that it compriseth in itself so many persons, societies, and nations[1]?"

The question thus put he answers by distinguishing eight grounds of unity.

1. The Church is one by consent in faith and opinion concerning all principal matters of doctrine. All who desert this one faith are to be esteemed *ipso facto* cut off and separated. But, on the other hand, there are points of less moment, more obscurely delivered, in which Christians may dissent, about which they may dispute, in which they may err, without breach of unity[2].

2. All Christians are united by the bands

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 204, 205, edit. Nelson, 1846.

[2] Ibid. pp. 206, 207. I quote for the most part verbally, but, for convenience of compression, without marks of quotation.

of mutual charity and good-will. Any one, therefore, who highly offends against charity, separates himself from the body of Christ; and since the causing of dissensions and factions in the Church is the most notorious violation of charity, the authors of causeless separations or of unjust condemnations of any Church are to be rejected as schismatic.

3. All Christians are united by spiritual cognation and alliance; as being all regenerated by the same incorruptible seed, being alike born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; whence as the sons of God, and brethren of Christ, they become brethren one to another.

4. The whole Christian Church is one by its incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, making up one spiritual corporation or republic, whereof Christ is the sovereign Lord. A habit of disobedience, therefore, severs a man from this body.

5. All Christians are linked together in peaceable concord and confederacy. In particular they are bound to assist one another in the common defence of truth, piety, and peace, in the propagation of the faith, and enlargement of the Church [1].

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 208, 209.

6. The Church is held together by a common discipline exercised by lawful pastors, who ought therefore to maintain intercourse and concurrence to preserve truth and charity. No Church should admit to communion those who are excommunicated by another, or who are schismatically divided from it.

7. All Christian Churches are also one by a specifical unity of discipline, resembling one another in ecclesiastical administrations, which are regulated by the indispensable sanctions and institutions of their Sovereign. They are all bound to use the same sacraments according to our Lord's appointment, without any substantial alteration, and to uphold the order and ministry which God appointed. In lesser matters of ceremony or discipline, instituted by human prudence, Churches may differ; but no power can abrogate the main form of discipline constituted by divine appointment. It is a fundamental rule that but one bishop should be in one Church; and no new priesthood can be ordained.

8. Lastly, it is expedient that all Churches should conform to each other in great matters of prudential discipline, although not instituted or prescribed by God [1].

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 211, 212.

It is clear that Barrow has in view that moral unity which is to be attained by submission to the will of God. The essential unity or numerical oneness of the Church is postulated—the unity of the field, the floor, or the draw-net. What is to be sought is the effective unity of those who are contained as members in the one Church; and these are the grounds to go upon. Having set them out he approaches the further question: "Whether the Church is also necessarily, by the design and appointment of God, to be in way of external policy under one singular government or jurisdiction of any kind; so as a kingdom or commonwealth are united under the command of one monarch or one senate?" He draws a negative answer from the silence of Scripture, from the practice of the Apostles, from the teaching of the Fathers, and from the fact that Churches not thus united have yet been recognized as Christian and Catholic. He argues it more particularly in a stern arraignment of the Papacy, which in claiming such singular jurisdiction has done not good but injury to the Church[1].

It is to be noted that, according to Barrow, the Church is no more to be ruled by a senate

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 212–219.

than by a monarch. The conciliar theory of the fifteenth century was no less foreign than the Papal theory to the essential constitution of the Church. Indeed he makes short work with it. General councils, he says, "are extraordinary, arbitrary, prudential means of restoring truth, peace, order, discipline; but from them nothing can be gathered concerning the continual ordinary state of the Church. For during a long time the Church wanted them; and afterwards had them but rarely; 'for the first three hundred years,' saith Bellarmine, 'there was no general assembly; afterwards scarce one in a hundred years[1].'" The unity of the Church, therefore, is not effected by general councils, and cannot be dependent thereon.

In pressing this argument, however, he uses an illustration which has to be read with caution: "General councils are wholesome expedients to clear truth and heal breaches; but the holding of them is no more an argument of political unity in the Church, than the Treaty of Munster was a sign of all Europe being under one civil government." But the Treaty of Munster was an agreement

[1] "Primis trecentis annis nulla fuit congregatio generalis; postea vero vix centesimo anno." *De Rom. Pont.* i. 8.

between independent sovereign states; and if Barrow's illustration is pressed too far it will commit him to the opinion that the several Churches of Christendom are in like manner separate and sovereign—an opinion clean contrary to the whole body of his treatise. We must, therefore, either pass this as an imperfect illustration, or we may suppose that Barrow was deeply impressed with the fundamental unity of the European system, which in the seventeenth century took the place of the older ideal of Christendom and the Empire. In that case he might see in a treaty agreed to by all the European Powers a close analogy to the decrees of an oecumenical council. But the main point is that general councils are not for the ordinary government of the Church; they are for exceptional emergencies. "In the opinion of St. Athanasius," he says, "there was no reasonable cause for synods, except in case of new heresies springing up, which may be confuted by the joint consent of bishops[1]."

For healing the disorders of the Church, therefore, Barrow did not look to the gathering of an oecumenical council. He even doubted whether, if possible, it would

[1] Athan. *de Syn.* § 6.

be expedient. In this respect he certainly moved somewhat from the usual ground of English divines, who from their first quarrel with the Papacy appealed to a general council, when one could be held. Barrow did not look to the methods of the fifteenth century, nor did he seek to revive even those of the fourth or fifth. He found a closer correspondence with the needs of modern times in the century of St. Cyprian [1].

§ 17.

Such is the position maintained by Barrow, with a prodigious array of learning, alike in his *Discourse concerning the Unity of the Church*, and in his *Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*. We are here on the high ground of theory. What was put forward as of practical moment? Every Christian man was bound to do what lay in his power to promote the unity of the Church. And how should he do this? By living in dutiful subjection to those set over him in the Lord. The practical enforcement of unity was to be sought in each several Church; for Englishmen in the Church of England. This was that part of the Church Catholic in which

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 222, 223.

God's providence had placed them. Living in communion with this, they were in communion with the whole.

This consequence was pressed at every turn. Dr. William Saywell, Archdeacon of Ely, published at Cambridge in 1689 an edition of the works of Launoi. The fact of itself is interesting, as an evidence of sympathy with the Gallican controversialists. The Preface, in which Saywell spoke not to English readers only but to the learned of Europe, admirably states the position of the English Church. "We have not," he says, "separated from the Catholic Faith, from the unity of the Church, or from any particular Church whatever[1]." Nor does he mean by this merely that we are not the authors of the schism or responsible for the separation; the division, he would say, is only in certain relations, not absolute or essential. He shows what is the nature of the really existing unity. The whole power—*potestas et auctoritas*—of teaching and ruling resides in the bishops and pastors of the Church; the prime duty of Christian men is to submit to their ruling. If all the bishops of the world could be gathered together, they

[1] "Non enim a fide Catholica, ab unitate Ecclesiae, aut ab ulla Ecclesia particulari separavimus."

might determine all matters by their common suffrages, after the fashion of an aristocratic commonwealth. Saywell clearly did not share Barrow's objection to an ecclesiastical senate. But since this can rarely be done, we must ordinarily depend upon the authority of the Church as diffused throughout the Episcopate, and exercised by the bishops in their respective dioceses, or even as deputed by them to parish priests. He who submits to their rule is maintaining the unity of the Church; he who rebels is rightly excommunicate [1].

[1] I transcribe the whole of a long passage, as the book is not readily accessible to all, and the argument is of first-rate importance: "Tota vero potestas et auctoritas docendi regendi corrigendi Ecclesiam Episcopis et Pastoribus commissa est; et nihil magis Christianis iniungitur quam pacem colere, schismata vitare, Pastores audire, eis obedire et se subiecere, eorum fidem sequi; et ne sub aliquo praetextu in doctrina et moribus ab ecclesiae unitate recedant, semper ad episcopos in dubiis et arduis recurrendum est. *Qui vos audit me audit, qui vos reicit me etiam reicit; et ecce vobiscum sum, usque ad consummationem saeculi.* Deinde Dominus ipse modum definiens quomodo lites et dissidia in Ecclesia terminanda sunt, ait: *Si peccaverit in te frater, dic Ecclesiae, et si Ecclesiam non audierit, sit tibi tanquam Ethnicus et Publicanus.* Et per Ecclesiam hic Episcopi et Presbyteri sunt intelligendi; quia statim subiungitur, *Quodcumque ligaveritis in terris ligatum erit et in caelis.* Per Ecclesiam igitur Servator denotat eos quibus incumbit sententiam ferre, et non obedientes excommunicationis vinculo ligare. Et si possent omnes Episcopi in unum convenire,

Barrow, once more, enforces the same principle in his Latin tract *De regimine Episcopali*. In form this is merely an academic exercise, but it is full of the learning and the vigorous thought of the man. He has to maintain the thesis that "The rejection of episcopal rule, where orthodox and lawful bishops are established, makes in the proper sense of the word a deadly schism[1]." *Episcopal rule*, he says, is that ancient and universal order of the Church, by which one supreme pastor

procul dubio omnibus aequale esset ius et auctoritas de rebus ecclesiasticis communi suffragio diiudicandi, ut est in regimine aristocratico: sed cum hoc saepe fieri non possit, unanimi Episcoporum consensu Ecclesia ita in Provincias, Dioeceses, et Parochias distributa est, ut quamvis diversis locis, eandem tamen fidem et caritatem omnes vere Catholici summa cum benevolentia amplectantur; et ad ostendendam strictam unionem et connexionem omnium membrorum inter se, et cum Christo capite, saepe Ecclesia comparatur corpori, viti, domui, &c. Quorum partes vitam et perfectionem amittunt quum primum a toto vel sua propria sede et loco separantur. Atque ita hac ratione Laicus qui non audit Parochum, et Parochus qui non audit Episcopum, et Episcopus qui non audit Synodum Provincialem, et Synodus Provincialis quae non audit Collegium Pastorum sive Concilium vere generale, in rebus ad pacem et unitatem Ecclesiae spectantibus, non audit Ecclesiam, ac proinde non Dominum ipsum qui dixit: *Si Ecclesiam non audierit, sit tibi tanquam Ethnicus et Publicanus.*"

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 240: "Reiectio regiminis episcopalis, ubi habentur orthodoxi et legitimi episcopi, facit proprie schisma mortale."

and overseer was appointed to rule the whole congregation of clergy and laity in a certain defined region, with certain offices reserved to himself, as ordaining and confirming and the exercise of jurisdiction[1] *Schism* he accurately defines as a division within the Church, marring the unity, charity, and peace in which it is the will of God that all Christians should abide. Schism is due either to faction within a particular Church, to an unjust refusal of one Church to communicate with another, or to the violation by any particular Church of the common rules and usages determined by the whole body[2]. The guilt of schism is incurred by those who reject episcopal rule, because, as he shows at large, it is either an act of rebellion against their immediate

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 240: "Illud nempe regimen, penes quod, in districtu quopiam ecclesiastico, singularis unus (ad id rite vocatus, delectus, approbatus et consecratus) toti coetui, totique clero praeficitur, ceu pastor et inspector supremus, in sacris quibuscunque rebus dispensandis et ordinandis, πρεσβεῖα quaedam obtinens et peculiaria munia sibi reservata, sacros ordines conferendi, baptizatos confirmandi, iurisdictionem exercendi."

[2] Ibid. p. 241: "Cum una quaepiam ecclesiasticae dispensationis modum quemcunque generali consensu a confoederatis pastoribus, εὐταξίας aut concordiae gratia, lege sancitum, vel usu firmatum (nulla cogente necessitate, vel gravi ratione suadente) violat."

superiors, or else it is a corporate departure from the fixed order of the Church and the institution of Christ. This proposition, however, is to be read with two limitations: the bishop must be *orthodox*, for it is not merely the right of the faithful but their duty to withdraw their allegiance from a heterodox bishop; and he must be *lawful*, that is to say, duly consecrated, and rightly promoted to his charge[1]. Subject to these two limitations, Barrow maintains the duty of submission, with no little insistence on St. Cyprian's judgement that the episcopate was expressly constituted for the defence of unity. The unity, as distinct from the mere numerical singleness of the Church, is to be upheld by every Christian remaining in the communion of his own proper bishop, and by all the bishops of the world remaining in communion with each other.

I will quote one more author, Beveridge, Bishop of St. Asaph, for piety and learning perhaps the greatest ornament of the English Church at the opening of the eighteenth

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 241: "Nam episcoporum heterodoxorum nedum regimen, at communionem ipsam reicere fas est, imo officii est." P. 242: "*Legitimi*; hoc est, qui cum rite consecrantur, tum iure populo suo praeficiuntur."

century. Beveridge has left us several ordination sermons, which form indeed a theological treatise on the sacred Ministry. The fourth of these treats of *Salvation in the Church only, under such a Ministry.* Starting from the text, *And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved* (Acts ii. 47), he shows that by the Church is here meant the society which the Lord founded by choosing the twelve and the seventy, and afterwards "took care to settle the perpetual government of it by granting to His Apostles the like power and commission which He had received from His Father for that purpose." Those converted by the preaching of the Apostles "are said to be *added to the Church*, that is, to the society or congregation of the faithful people before described; consisting of the Apostles, as the governors of it, and of such as were joined to them, and held communion with them in the Word and Sacraments, which our Lord had instituted. And when the said society was dispersed, as it soon was, over the whole world, it was still the same, and retained the same name, being still called the Church. And not only the whole, but wheresoever any part of it was settled in any city, and the territories belonging to it,

that also was called the Church of that city; as the Church of Jerusalem, the Church of Corinth, &c. And wheresoever there were several such cities and Churches in them belonging to any province or country, they are called the Churches of that country; as the Churches of Asia, Macedonia, &c. But as every private Christian is a member of some particular Church, so is every particular Church a member of the catholic or universal, which is always meant when we read in Scripture of the Church in general, without the addition of place or country [1]."

Of the necessity of being thus added to the Church, he says: "Forasmuch as this being the way and method that He hath settled in the world for the saving of souls, or for the applying that salvation to them which He hath purchased for them; we have no ground to expect that He should ever recede from it." This position he supports by recalling the conversion of Cornelius, of the Aethiopian eunuch, and of St. Paul, concluding that God would rather work miracles to bring men into the Church, than save any without it. "Seeing therefore," he continues, "that the Holy Ghost hath so positively affirmed that

[1] Beveridge, *Works*, vol. i. pp. 72–4, edit. Oxford, 1817.

the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved, and likewise hath given us such extraordinary instances of it: it is no wonder that the Fathers so frequently assert, that there is no salvation to be had out of Christ's holy catholic Church; but that whosoever would be a member of the Church triumphant in heaven, must first be a member of the Church here militant on earth [1]."

Here is the same teaching. The Church is one and universal, but it is geographically distributed into several particular Churches. The plain duty of every individual Christian is to adhere to the particular Church in which God's providence has placed him, and so he is retained in the unity of the whole Church. Particular Churches also have their duty. Beveridge sets this out in a sermon preached before the Convocation of Canterbury. Every provincial Church is bound to adhere to all that is determined by the universal Church, even in matters of rite and discipline. This obligation flows from the very nature of an ordered society, and the Church is bound to be the most orderly of all societies [2].

[1] Beveridge, *Works*, vol. i. pp. 75–77.

[2] Beveridge, *Thesaurus Theologicus*, vol. ii. p. 331, edit. Oxford, 1816: "Ad rectam Provincialis cuiuslibet Ecclesiae

§ 18.

The teaching, theoretical and practical, which I have here set out is not that only of certain individual theologians. It is the expression of a belief solidly held by the whole Church of England, and of a practice which for a time was strenuously enforced. It was enforced, not only by spiritual censures, but also by civil penalties. In the heat of reaction from the anarchy tempered by tyranny into which Calvinism had plunged England, the State accepted the theory of the Church. All Christians living within the realm were to be forced

constitutionem necessarium esse, ut Ecclesiae universae disciplina ac ritus ab eadem observentur, constat ex ipsa Ecclesiae natura ac notione. Ecclesia enim, generatim sic dicta, una est permagna hominum ubicunque terrarum Christi fidem profitentium Societas aut Congregatio, cuius singulae Provinciales Ecclesiae totidem sunt partes sive membra. In omnibus autem huiusmodi societatibus, qualis est Ecclesia, pars omnis toti suo congrua, et pars minor maiori consentanea esse debet. Hoc ratio suadet. Hoc ius naturale edicit. Hoc communis hominum consensus necessarium esse statuit. Adeo ut si quid a maiori, multo magis quod a maxima cuiusvis societatis parte constituitur, eodem pars reliqua constringatur, illudque observare necesse habeat, si membrum manere et privilegiis istius societatis gaudere velit. Quod cum in omnibus cuiuscunque generis societatibus valeat, multo magis in Ecclesia valere debet, quam omnium ordinatissimam esse decet."

into unity. The procedure adopted, as we now see, was terribly unwise, even if we say no worse. Civil rights were made dependent on conformity, and the sacraments were profaned as a title to public office. Nor was this the whole of the harm done. The intimate connexion of Church and State bred an almost inevitable confusion in ordinary minds. The result was not patent while the repressive policy was maintained. But with the first Act of Toleration the result began to appear. Spiritual censures carried with them temporal disabilities; therefore, if Dissenters were to be tolerated, they must be released from the jurisdiction of the spiritual courts. This was done, and the bishops and their officials were restrained from proceeding against a man who formally claimed his rights as a Dissenter. But the same man was driven by the Test Act to communicate in his parish church, in order to qualify for office. He was allowed, nay compelled, to claim the rights of a member of the Church, and, at the same time, he might not be subjected to the discipline of the Church. Occasional conformity, as it was called, was the inevitable result, and only a feeble attempt was made to restrain it. The authorities of the Church were themselves in practice made

parties to the toleration of that dissent which in theory they denounced.

With the popular delusions that ensued I am not directly concerned. I am dealing only with the teaching of theologians. But the existence of such delusions may lead us to ask whether anything in the matter or manner of contemporary theology afforded them occasion.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century English theologians were in face of a certain definite controversy. The country was affected by a twofold schism. On the one hand were the Recusants, or Papists, as they were invariably and accurately called, who refused the communion of the English bishops on the ground of heresy; on the other hand there were organized bodies of Calvinist or Protestant Dissenters, who rejected the authority of the bishops as unscriptural. Each of these schisms was further connected with a certain theory of the Church, and theological writing, even when not directly polemical, was coloured by the consciousness of the dispute. This might have induced a preciseness of definition corresponding to what was found in Curialist and Calvinist authors. The former, as we have seen, were driven by

the stress of controversy to import into the formal definition of the Church the note of subjection to the Roman Pontiff: the latter were compelled to justify their separation by a theory which reduced the visible Church to a particular congregation of men associated by their own choice of companionship. But the theologians of the English Church were not driven to any such straits. They took their stand on the historical position of their Church. They challenged opponents to dislodge them from this ground. They examined and refuted all definitions framed for the purpose of excluding them from the pale of the Church: but they had no need to aim at an equal nicety in their turn. Their object was to show that neither Recusants nor Dissenters were justified in their separation. "I do not scruple," says Barrow, "to affirm the Recusants in England to be no less schismatics than any other separatists[1]." To this end they laboured to show, on the one hand, that in faith and polity the English Church conformed to the standard universally recognized until the rise of the papal monarchy; on the other hand, that she required of her children nothing but what was founded on warranty

[1] Barrow, *Works*, vol. iii. p. 225.

of Holy Scripture. Their practical teaching was: *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna.*

The inevitable result was an exaggerated nationalism, and a certain looseness of doctrine. Disputants who were always telling Papists and Calvinists alike that they had no cause for separation from the national Church, could not be very precise on differences of opinion, and might easily seem indifferent to the truth. It is true they were not always consistent. According to their theory, strictly interpreted, they had no direct concern with the corruptions, practical or doctrinal, of other Churches, and notably of the Church of Rome. Their ground of quarrel with the Pope was, first, that he claimed a jurisdiction over them which they rejected, and, secondly, that he countenanced and admitted to his communion the English Recusants. Doctrinal disputes, however, with the Recusants, who took their doctrine from Rome, complicated the disciplinary controversy with the Papacy; and this was one of the causes which wrecked the attempt of Wake at a practical union between the Anglican and the Gallican Churches. On the other hand, the passionate, unreasoning abhorrence of papal rule, felt by nearly all Englishmen, embittered the doctrinal dispute,

until differences were rather exaggerated than minimized. The fading memory of the Puritan tyranny left nothing of the kind to sharpen the controversy with Dissenters, and they were too often treated as merely unreasonable schismatics. It was recognized, indeed, as we have seen, that there were grounds on which Christian men might lawfully withdraw their obedience from the bishops set over them, but the nature of these grounds was seldom defined with precision ; it was enough to show that the grounds alleged by the Dissenters were insufficient. They were insufficient, partly because they were false, partly because they were trivial. The Dissenters were urged to lay aside their objections, renouncing those and waiving these. But for them, both alike were founded in conscience. The Church was exhibited in controversy as regardless of conscience, intolerant where she was strong, indifferent where she was weak.

I speak of an impression produced by a certain controversial method, not of the express teaching of any authors. It is an impression of the Church as a great national institution, embracing in a sense the whole population, without much regard to the belief or practice of individuals. Over against this idea stood

the fact of the existence of several organized bodies, holding aloof from the national Church on the ground of certain beliefs or practices regarded by their members as vital. Combine the idea and the fact, which are inconsistent but not mutually exclusive, and there issues the confusion which seems to dominate English thought in the eighteenth century. Public opinion was able to accept in varying proportions the theory of the Established Church, and the theory of the denominational system. The Church of England appeared at one time the national organization of religion; at another she was one denomination among many. Butler, with characteristic fidelity to fact, accepted the denominational system as existing. In his sermon on the Propagation of the Gospel he claims the control of the work for the Church, but he thinks it "much to be wished that serious men of all denominations would join in it." In the true spirit of latitudinarianism he bids them "remember, that if Christianity is to be propagated at all, which they acknowledge it should, it must be in some particular form of profession. And though they think ours liable to objections, yet it is possible they themselves may be mistaken; and whether they are or no, the

very nature of society requires some compliance with others [1]." But latitudinarianism was not always so logical as in Butler. Without having any clear conception of the unity of the Church, men were nevertheless fretted by the existence of Dissent. The effect of the prevailing confusion is noticeable in the attitude of Wesley. He could exhort his followers to remain united to the Church, while ignoring his whole life long the hierarchical basis of unity.

Another effect is seen in the schemes for *comprehension*, as it was called, which the eighteenth century produced in abundance. Easier terms, not indeed of communion, for such could hardly be invented, but of admission to the ministry of the Church, were sought in a relaxation of subscription; Dissenters were to be cajoled into a purely external union. Such schemes, renewed in the present century by Arnold and his followers, even if the Church could have agreed to them, would have been wrecked upon the rugged conscience of the Dissenters. With them we have no immediate concern; we are considering the teaching of theologians.

[1] Butler, *Sermons*, p. 174, edit. 1828.

§ 19.

So far as this confusion of thought was due to the neglect of instant facts by the divines of the seventeenth century, an obvious remedy was to return to their principles and apply them rigorously to the facts as developed. This course was taken by those who saw the need. The Oxford movement, if it was an appeal to the Fathers, was no less a revival of the true English theology. In the face of a militant, an almost triumphant sectarianism, it was necessary to state afresh the theory of the Church. New principles were not wanted, but an application of old principles to existing circumstances. The need was supplied. I shall not quote from any of the Tractarian leaders; I shall quote from one who enjoyed far more fully than they the confidence of the whole English Church.

Palmer's *Treatise on the Church of Christ* appeared in the year 1838. Its authority was at once recognized; it remained for many years the standard work on the subject. I shall attempt to extract the author's teaching on the particular point of the unity of the Church.

He treats this under the two general heads of unity in *Communion* and unity in *Faith*. He subjects the idea alike of unity and of

schism to a searching analysis. "Particular Churches," he says, "were instituted by the apostles in obedience to the divine will, not to *divide*, but to *organize* the Church universal." Their relation to the whole is thus clearly determined. They are rather administrative than component parts. They exist for the sake of the whole; and the relations of an individual to them are determined by his relations to the whole. Palmer thus avoids the mistake of proceeding from the particular to the universal; he recognizes from the first the universal in the particular. This leaves no room for the fault, common to so many English writers, of strenuously defending the unity of the particular Church, to the comparative or entire neglect of the unity of the universal. He looks both ways at once. "Hence the communion of the Church," he says, "is twofold, and there may be offences against it in two ways: either in dividing the communion of a particular Church, or in dividing that of the universal Church. The one arises, when professing Christians divide or refuse to communicate with the particular Church of which they are members: the other, where particular Churches refuse to communicate with the universal

Church; that is, with the great body of Christians." On the effect of such schism he passes the severest judgement. "When one or more professing Christians separate themselves from the communion of a particular Church, and from that of the great body of Christians, or are cut off from it by a regular and legitimate judgement, they are *totally* separated from the Church of God [1]."

After an examination of authorities he naturally concludes that "*separation from the Church is incapable of justification.* No excuse can be admitted in the case of positive and deadly sin, except the plea of *ignorance;* and this does not render the act less heinous, though he who commits it may be 'beaten with few stripes.' To separate openly from the universal Church, or, which is the same thing, to separate from a particular Church, on grounds and principles which equally involve separation from the universal Church, is, as I have said, inexcusable [2]." Are there then no grounds which can justify separation? He allows their existence, but defines them much more narrowly than his predecessors. "The mere existence of doctrinal errors, or the corruption of rites

[1] Palmer, vol. i. pp. 51, 52. [2] Ibid. p. 61.

and sacraments in any Church, afford no excuse whatever for separating from its communion. The abuses of the Corinthians, the errors of the Galatians, did not justify any separation from those Churches; on the contrary, the duty of union was strongly inculcated on them by the Apostle. . . . I speak here only of faults and defects which do not amount to a rejection of what God has plainly revealed, or to a manifest contradiction and disobedience to His commandment; because if any Church of Christ should be guilty of such a rejection and contradiction, and obstinately persist in them, it would be *apostate*, and cease *ipso facto* to be a Church of Christ; and therefore he who should forsake its communion, would not forsake the communion of the Church, but of a synagogue of Satan [1]." Nothing short of apostasy, then, can justify separation from any particular Church.

Unity in *communion* is thus intimately connected with unity in *faith*. Palmer regards this in two lights — as an obligation, and as an actual fact. "THE TRUTH revealed by Christ must be believed by all Christians in order to salvation [2]." But not every error amounts to heresy. "Heresy is the *perti-*

[1] Palmer, vol. i. pp. 63, 64. [2] Ibid. p. 88.

nacious denial of some truth *certainly* revealed [1]." And this alone imperils salvation; this alone excludes from the Church. Errors in *matters of opinion* are tolerable. But even in *matters of faith*, "if a doctrine has been declared *de fide* by the legitimate judgement of the universal Church, still if through an error *of fact* it is supposed by some Churches not to have been so declared, they do not incur heresy in retaining a different doctrine." And conversely, "Churches which through an *error of fact*, but on strong reasons, believe a doctrine to have been defined by the universal Church as a matter of faith, which was in reality not so defined, and which is erroneous even in faith, are not guilty of heresy in holding that doctrine [2]." It follows that while the obligation of unity in faith lies upon all Christian people, it is not necessarily realized in actual fact. Apparent unity in faith cannot therefore be taken as a mark or sign of the Church, nor can apparent disunion be taken as a proof of defection from the Church. But on the

[1] Palmer, vol. i. p. 91.

[2] Ibid. pp. 106–108. He supports these propositions by many historical instances, but he does not allude to a point of much interest at the present day—their application to the so-called Nestorians and Monophysites of the East.

other hand, "Christ having enjoined unity in the belief of the truth on all Christians, there must necessarily be in His Church some means for preserving or restoring this unity, as well in particular Churches as in the Church universal; and, therefore, all those societies which are prevented by their fundamental principles from sustaining unity in the truth, cannot be Churches of Christ [1]."

Proceeding as he does from the universal to the particular, Palmer has no need to insist on the numerical unity or singleness of the Church. His object also led him to neglect this point. He had to set out the four notes of the Church—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic. Face to face with a multitude of discordant sects and communities, all claiming for themselves membership in the Church of Christ, he saw the necessity of determining which of them were entitled to the claim. Assuming then the oneness of the Church, these, if their claim be true, must be parts of the one. But if so they must partake of its character. The notes of the true Church must in some way be found in them. The first of these notes is Unity. Palmer, as we have seen, reduced this to unity in communion and unity in

[1] Palmer, vol. i. p. 115.

faith. Unity, in the sense of singleness, is of no avail as a test; it is not an attribute of which the parts can partake. Of the moral unity of the whole Church, of its corporate and sacramental unity, they can partake, and by this they can be tested. Palmer applies the test, along with those supplied by the other notes of the Church, to the various claimant bodies. He finds no difficulty in allowing the claims of the British and of the orthodox Eastern Churches. Of the Churches of the Roman communion, he distinguishes carefully between those founded anterior to any schism, those founded more recently in heathen lands, and those founded by an invasion of other Churches. The last only he pronounces schismatical, on the ground of broken unity in communion. He then turns to consider the case of the Protestant and Calvinist communities. Of the English Dissenters he makes short work. He shows that the principle of separation is a "*maxim* of dissent[1]," and those who maintain it can have no claim to be regarded as integral parts of the Church whose note is unity. The Lutherans and Reformed of continental Europe he holds to have been unjustly and

[1] Palmer, vol. i. p. 406.

against their will driven from the communion of the Church. He will not therefore lay to their charge the sin of schism. "Under such circumstances they had no remedy, and were obliged to remain as a distinct community until God should see fit to restore them to union with the rest of the Church." As individuals, therefore, they may be considered as not cut off totally from the unity of the Church; but as organized bodies they lack the other notes of the true Church, and cannot be accounted integral parts of it. Their organization was purely provisional. The favour at one time shown them by English divines he attributes to a charitable interpretation of their acts and principles. "There was a great probability that they were not schismatics nor heretics; and as they did not exhibit an unfriendly feeling to our Churches, there were good and sufficient reasons to view them with kindness and charity. The sufferings which we experienced, in common with them, from the persecution and ambition of the Roman pontiff, added sympathy to this general good-will; and the agreement on certain points of doctrine and discipline against Rome may have, perhaps, induced us to give a better construction to some things

than they deserved, and to overlook some faults which an unfriendly, or even a strict criticism would have condemned." Their after history, however, made this impossible. They "deemed it necessary to assume the office and character of Churches of Christ in the ordinary sense"; and this "led them to reject that Catholic tradition which did not support their novel system, and thus to open the door for the intrusion of heresy and infidelity[1]." Thus Palmer, whose opinion I quote as interesting in itself, without passing judgement on its historical accuracy.

It will be seen that Palmer treats his subject in that practical, not to say polemical, tone, which characterizes most of the authors that I have quoted. Of the unity of the Church in the abstract he has not much to say; and therefore he does not touch, unless incidentally, on the distinction between the essential, indestructible unity of the Church, and that practical unity which depends on human agency. The distinction is, however, implied in a question which he treats at great length. He glances at *essential* unity when he speaks of an *impossibility*. "*Unity of communion*," he says, "being the law of

[1] Palmer, vol. i. pp. 382 392.

God, both in the universal Church, and in all the particular Churches in which it is arranged, it is impossible that *in the same place there can be several different Churches*, authorized by God and united to Christ[1]." But given the necessary existence of one Church only in each particular place, as a member of the Church universal, he goes on to ask the important question, "*Whether the external communion of the universal Church can ever be interrupted*[2]." We have here a question which our older writers had strangely neglected. An affirmative answer is necessary to the defence of their position. It is an obvious fact that all the particular Churches which they recognized as parts of the universal are not actually knit in the bonds of perfect unity and communion. On the contrary they hold aloof, sullenly or fiercely; they denounce, they even anathematize each other. If, then, the external communion of the Church cannot be interrupted, if the fullness of external communion be a part of the essential unity of the Church, it will follow that only one of these discordant parts can belong to the true Church. Controversialists had urged this against the

[1] Palmer, vol. i. p. 68. [2] Ibid. pp. 71 seqq.

English position; English divines had been slow to answer. Palmer undertook the task.

He shows that what is said in Holy Scripture about the unity of the Church is either to be understood of a spiritual unity of relations to Christ, or of spiritual privileges, which might exist even if external unity were interrupted; or else must be taken as showing by way of moral precept rather what ought to be than what must be. From the very earnestness of our Saviour's repeated prayer for the unity of His disciples he infers "that the Church was in imminent danger of disunion, and that so great an evil would most probably at some time arrive." He then shows that neither the Fathers nor the Councils of the Church ever affirm the impossibility of such divisions among the members of the one Church as should amount to a breach of communion. The well-known passage in which St. Cyprian says that "unity cannot be severed, nor the one body by laceration be divided[1]," refers to the Novatian schism at Rome, and asserts only the impossibility of the coexistence of two Churches in one

[1] Cypr. *De Unitate*, c. 23, p. 231, edit. Hartel: "Scindi unitas non potest nec corpus unum discidio compaginis separari, divulsis laceratione visceribus in frusta discerpi."

place. It says nothing of the estrangement of different parts of the Church from each other. In the third place he brings into evidence the many recorded interruptions of communion between bishops alike of the East and of the West, in which it is agreed that both parties remained in the unity of the whole Church: he insists especially on the Great Schism of the fourteenth century, when for nearly forty years the Latin Church was divided into two or even three obediences. Lastly he quotes various theologians, and in particular Tournely, as distinguishing three kinds of excommunication; the first, "by which bishops are deprived of the charity and ecclesiastical communion of other bishops"; a second, "by which a person was totally cut off from the body of the Church"; and a third, "most customary among the ancients . . . by which bishops or Churches separated themselves from mutual communion, and thus one, *as it were*, excommunicated the other, though not subject to it[1]." This last kind, according to Tournely, is not excommunication properly so called. "Therefore," he concludes, "if the Church universal should be divided into two portions by *such an excommunication*, neither party

[1] Tournely, *Praelect. Theol. de Ecclesia*, qu. iv. art. iv.

would be truly cut off from the Church, and therefore the Church would exist in different communions[1]." There may be divisions, inducing a breach of external communion, by which the unity of the Church, though impaired, would not be destroyed.

§ 20.

The elaborate but condensed argument in which Palmer deals with this question, fills up a serious gap in the English presentment of the doctrine of unity. His treatment of the doctrine as a whole is not exhaustive; as I have noted, he passes by the points of essential and of numerical unity; but he supplies what was lacking in earlier theologians. The defects and the merits of his work are closely connected. There is in his method a sort of hard and hammering logic which was needed for the rescue of English thought from the confusion that had mastered it. There is in his argument a tone of bitter polemic, and a certain narrowness of view, which occasionally betrays him into inconsistency. An instance may be found in his treatment of a question which was then beginning to press for solution.

[1] This passage is interesting as fixing the sense in which we speak of the Church as divided into various *Communions*. See above, p. 23.

The geographical arrangement of the Church was from the beginning the basis of practical unity. To St. Cyprian it was the pledge of unity: there was to be one bishop in a city, and a united episcopate. On this ground the English bishops took their stand in rejecting the Papal jurisdiction. All English theologians since have stood by the same principle, and Palmer with them. But he was familiar with a certain modification of it, established by centuries of usage in the East. The violent controversies which broke up the unity of the Eastern Church in the fifth and sixth centuries have left a legacy of confusion to our day. Inveterate schisms, following as a rule the lines of national divisions, are not easily healed, even when their original cause is removed. There are now several communities, Nestorian, Monophysite, or Monothelite in their origin, which have been led, chiefly by Roman influence, to abandon their heresy, and are admitted to the communion of the Roman Church. But they retain their independent organization, and their jurisdictions are interlaced over the whole field of Oriental Christendom. The position is further complicated by a Latin Christianity, introduced in the time of the Crusades. There

are thus, besides the Orthodox Eastern Church, various independent hierarchies, with their several patriarchs, all in communion with the Roman See. Palmer allows this to be effected without any formal breach of unity. As a provisional arrangement, at least, it may be tolerated[1]. But when he has to face a not dissimilar state of things in the West, his judgement is much more rigid. Setting aside England, where it is clear that the adherents of the Roman communion separated themselves in formal schism from the local Church, there have been established, in several new countries, rival hierarchies of the Anglican and the Roman communions. These are the fruit of a division which may well be regarded as inveterate, and which follows in the main the lines of national cleavage—notably between England and Ireland. We might expect to find the same charitable judgement passed on these rival hierarchies as on those of the East. Palmer indeed defends in this way the establishment of an Anglican hierarchy in one region. After allowing the regularity of the Church founded by the French settlers in North America, he proceeds: "If, in Canada, the English com-

[1] Palmer, vol. i. pp. 302–304.

munity united to our Catholic Churches have bishops and priests, it is only as a matter of necessity, because the Church there refuses them communion, and they are properly for the English only. The arrangement must be considered only provisional in a certain measure, and not designed to interfere with the prior claims of the Roman Churches there, within their *proper districts*." But a similar establishment of bishops of the Roman communion in the United States he condemns without reserve: "When America received bishops from our Churches, the schismatics constituted a rival episcopacy, and so remain to this day separated from the true Church [1]." It might be more fairly argued that in the West, or in new countries associated with the West, as in the ancient field of Eastern Christendom, the effects of a long-standing quarrel may require, provisionally at least, some modification of the geographical arrangement of the Church. In the United States, with their extraordinary gathering of people from all parts of the old world, bred in every form of Christian profession, the question is most pressing and will perhaps find its solution.

[1] Palmer, vol. i. pp. 304, 305.

§ 21.

If it was the merit of Palmer's work to clear away confusion, his defects were hardly less serviceable in calling for the completion of his system. His neglect of the natural or essential unity of the Church compelled attention to it, as the necessary foundation of all manifest unity. Manning followed him with a treatise on the unity of the Church, in which *natural* and *moral* unity are carefully distinguished; the natural unity which is the immediate work of God and is therefore indestructible, and the moral unity which, depending on human agency, is variable and may fail entirely. This distinction became the keynote of the aspirations after the reunion of Christendom which have lately been so marked a feature of English religion. I have traced it in many of our older writers; it has found clear and familiar expression during the last half-century.

Dr. Alexander Forbes, the late Bishop of Brechin, proposed another distinction. He divided unity into *objective* and *subjective*. "Objective unity is that inwrought by our Head, Jesus Himself, through union with Himself. It is wrought on His side, by the communication of the 'one Spirit,' and by the Sacraments, making us all one body in Him. It

requires, on our part, continuity of the commission which He gave to His Apostles, and perseverance in the faith which He committed to the Church. Subjective unity is unity of will, and intercommunion with one another. Subjective unity may be suspended, while objective unity is maintained. Subjective unity was suspended during the schism at Antioch, yet objective unity is maintained, for the blessed Meletius is a saint. Subjective unity was suspended in the quarrels between the British and Western Churches in the Saxon times, yet nobody doubts of the salvation or sanctity of St. Aidan or St. Cuthbert. Subjective unity was suspended during the struggles of the antipopes, yet no one considers the followers of Peter de Luna as either heretics or schismatics. And this must also apply to the mighty disunion between the East and the West, and between ourselves and the rest of Christendom. It is deeply to be deplored that the state of the Church is as it is; but let us hope, that the evil is not so great as it seems, and that there is a fund of unity, if men only understood each other; that the fissures are only surface ones; that the disorder is functional, not organic[1]."

[1] Forbes, *Explanation of the Nicene Creed*, p. 276. Second edition, 1866.

This is clearly a cross-division. The objective unity of Forbes is partly natural and the immediate work of God, partly moral, depending on our continuance and perseverance. Forbes would probably say that a purely natural unity is a mere abstraction. The Church, a society of moral beings, cannot have any real unity which is independent of their moral co-operation. A simple static unity—the unity for example of the baptized as such—is nothing more than a classification; nor does it become a living unity, through the relation of the members to the Head, without the express or implicit perseverance of the members in adhesion.

Pusey, than whom no one of our day has pondered more deeply the question of unity, adopted these terms, but used them in the older sense. "Unity," he wrote, "in part, is the direct gift of God; in part, it is the fruit of that gift in the mutual love of the members of the Church. In part, it is a spiritual oneness wrought by God the Holy Ghost; in part, it is a grace, to be exercised by man, a consequence and fruit of that gift. In one way, it is organic unity derived from Christ, and binding all to Christ, descending from the Head to the Body, and uniting the

Body to the Head; in another, it consists in acts of love from the members one to another[1]." Quoting from St. Athanasius, he shows that the primal unity of the Church is "an actual mystical oneness, inwrought by Christ our Head, uniting the whole Church together in one with Himself in His Body: an actual oneness produced by grace, corresponding to the Oneness of the Father and the Son by nature[2]." He shows how St. Hilary urges against the Arians that the unity of the Church is an unity not of will but of nature[3]. This unity is imparted primarily through the sacraments, and so far depends on the continuance of the powers given to the Apostles; but the work done by the sacraments is essentially the work of God. Those who wilfully reject the organization by which sacramental grace is given, reject Christ. Those who retain it are like the river of Eden, which is one though it parted and became into four heads. "Unknown in face, in place separate, different in language, opposed, alas! in some things to one another, still before the Throne of God they are One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church; each several portion praying for itself and for the rest,

[1] *Eirenicon*, part i. p. 45. [2] Ibid. p. 47. [3] Ibid. p. 51.

united in the prayers and oblation which it offers for all, by the One Bread and the One Spirit which dwelleth in all[1]."

He then passes to the subjective, which is for him the whole moral unity of the Church. "The Divine gift of Unity requires, as a corresponding duty, mutual love as the exercise of that 'love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given to us.' This has been called 'subjective' unity, or 'unison of wills,' and of this, intercommunion is the natural expression." He shows, with his usual wealth of erudition, that in the history of the Church there have been numerous interruptions of communion without breach of the organic unity of the Church. He shows the true nature of Donatism, involving a different kind of schism from these, and one which is often misunderstood. "The Donatists were not merely separated from the Catholic Church throughout the world, but denied its existence, and claimed to be the whole Church. The body was formed on a heresy, rejected by the English Church[2]." He points to the evidence of the life of grace, of the working of the Holy Ghost, in "the several Churches, owning the

[1] *Eirenicon*, part i. p. 57, et ante. [2] Article XXVI.

same Lord, united to Him by the same Sacraments, confessing the same Faith[1]."

Objective unity is therefore the work of God. It is a gift of grace; but since the Church is the creation of grace this gift is the natural law of the Church's life, organic, essential, indestructible as the Church herself. Subjective unity on the other hand is the result of human effort, corresponding to the Divine grace given; like all the fruits of grace it varies with the varying efforts of the individual man. It can never disappear entirely, as holiness can never be banished entirely from the visible Church, but its natural expression by intercommunion may for a time be lost.

§ 22.

It remains for me to summarize all this teaching—the public doctrine of the Church and the teaching of theologians.

The Church is, in the first place, *numerically* one. There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism. There is, moreover, but one human race, one naturally indivisible human society, and the Church is designed to embrace the whole of it. There is but one foundation and

[1] *Eirenicon*, part i. pp. 58–66.

one superstructure. The Church is essentially singular, and is divided into a plurality of parts only for reasons of administration. It was founded in a single community, and remains as truly one, though widely expanded, as when gathered wholly at Jerusalem.

The Church is *essentially* one, not a mere aggregate of parts. This truth, propounded by Nicholson and others in the seventeenth century [1], but obscured or neglected by many writers, has more recently obtained the fullest recognition. This oneness, being essential, is not a mere matter of classification. It belongs to the nature of the Church. There is therefore a *natural* unity; and since the Church consists of persons united by the grace of God to Christ, in a manner comparable to the union of the members of a living body with

[1] Nicholson, *Exposition of the Catechism*, p. 58, edit. Oxford, 1842: "This Church is but one, as it is in the Nicene Creed; one body knit together by one Spirit, under one Head. 'There is but one Lord, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism.' Inwardly, then, and essentially it is but one, but outwardly and externally you may say there be many Churches either national or congregational; who are bound to retain one faith, but may differ in rites and ceremonies." It is not easy to see what he means by *congregational*. Of course he does not use the word in its modern sense. I think he must have had in view any grouping of dioceses on other than national lines.

their head, this unity is rightly called *organic*. From another point of view it is a *social* unity, since the Church visible is a form of human society, ordained by God as a means to the salvation of men.

This unity of the Church, essential, natural, organic, social, is the work of God alone, fixed and immovable as the laws of nature. The Church is not only unalterably one, it is also unalterably united. The individual man is gathered into this unity not by any act or volition of his own, but by his baptism, which the Church as the Body of Christ administers, but in which the Holy Ghost Himself operates. In this unity the man remains until he is either cast from it by effective excommunication, or falls from it by apostasy from the conditions of membership. In neither case is he removed by any act of human will, but by the working of a divine law—the natural law of the Church's being. No man can divide the Church essentially. The member cut off ceases to be a member.

This unity, being organic, depends upon a certain principle of life, which is the possession of the true faith and sacramental grace. This is diffused through all the parts of the one Church, though it may not be found every-

where in the same vigour; and therefore if it fail entirely in any part, that part is cut off as a branch and withered. It ceases to be a part of the Church at all, remotely through its own will and action, but immediately through the cessation of the flow of life.

This unity, being social, depends upon the continuance of a certain order. The Church was founded in the fellowship of the Apostles, and this fellowship developed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, into a hierarchy, which extends into every part of the Christian society. This hierarchy alone, by the grace of God, binds the scattered parts together. The episcopate, in particular, is one solid indivisible order, and the individual Christian is held immovably in union with this whole order by communion with his own bishop.

In addition to this natural, essential unity, there is another kind of unity proposed to the Church as an end of moral action. In contrast with the other it is called *subjective*, because it is immediately dependent upon human volition; but as realized and expressed in action it is in truth equally objective. It is a *moral* as distinct from a natural, a *functional* as distinct from an organic unity. It is the result of an effort, on the part either of the

individual or of the community, to live in correspondence with the divine grace of unity. Its principle is charity. Its outward expression is found, on the part of the individual, in loyal submission to authority, in mutual forbearance, in prayer and almsgiving and other acts of charity; on the part of the community, in the same acts corporately performed [1], and especially in free and perfect intercommunion.

This moral unity corresponds to the natural unity of the Church, and therefore to its various phases. Corresponding with the organic unity of the Church is free and brotherly participation in the sacraments, free and brotherly communication for the defence and propagation of the faith. Corresponding with the social unity of the Church is the common action of each several diocese or province; in a wider field, the brotherly intercourse of Church with Church, bishop with bishop, the mutual recognition of each other's acts,

[1] Moral union between England and the rest of Christendom might seem to be ended after the accession of Elizabeth; yet in 1565 public prayers were ordered for the rescue of the Knights of Malta from the Turks; and in the following year for "the Emperor's excellent Majesty, as God's principal minister," and "all the Christian army now assembled with him," to resist the Turks in Hungary. See *Liturgical Services of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, Parker Society, pp. 519–535.

mutual support against heresy or schism; in the last resort, the assembly of a General Council and the universal acceptance of its decrees.

This moral unity is an end; it is set before us according to the will of God as a thing to be attained. It is also a means; it is necessary to the perfect well-being of the Church, to the final conversion of the world, to the accomplishment of the work of salvation. It must therefore be realized; but the necessity does not stand in any special time or manner. The moral unity of the Church may be realized in varying degrees. In different parts of the Church it may be realized in varying intensity; between some parts there may be the closest union; between others at the same time there may be grave dissension. No part, perhaps, can ever be entirely without moral union with the rest, but the outward expression of it may be all but wholly lost.

The moral unity is therefore variable, but the natural unity is indefectible. In this sense we declare our belief in the Church, past, present, and to come, ONE AND UNITED.

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